



International Wheelchair Rugby Federation

# The Wheelchair Rugby Press

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## Presidents Message from Brad Mikkelsen

Greetings everyone, and Happy Holidays from the Presidents office of the International Wheelchair Rugby Federation. As many of you know, it's been a very busy time for rugby these past few months. Three Zone Championships were held, the Motion for Independence agreement was signed with IWAS, and development clinics were held in both Hungary and India. Many people have given of their time, expertise, and positive energy to help this great sport, which in turn enhances the lives of so many people. Thank you for your contributions!

I have only two messages for this newsletter. First; I would encourage people to consider the new IWRF. There are many documents that need to be reviewed for voting into use, and policy and procedure to be sorted out, and positions to be filled.

Wheelchair Rugby has a long history of being developed from the grass roots, by people who are close to the game. Lets keep this tradition alive.

Second; I hope that you are able to enjoy the holiday season with family and loved ones, and that the New Year is full of joy and good will for you and yours!

Wishing you all the best!

Brad Mikkelsen  
IWRF President



## IWRF becomes Independent Sport Federation by Eron Main



November 24, 2009 was a big day for wheelchair rugby. The General Assembly of IWAS member nations held in Bangalore, India during the 2009 IWAS World Games approved the transfer of Wheelchair Rugby governance from IWAS to the International Wheelchair Rugby Federation (IWRF) effective January 1, 2010. This vote was the culmination of a three-year process of gaining independence for wheelchair rugby.

The process began in September 2006, when the IWRF strategic planning session identified independence as a key requirement to allow the sport to achieve its goals. Independence planning continued through 2007, and in 2008 the process took a further step forward when Eron Main was hired to manage the establishment of an independent IWRF. This led to the affirmative vote in favour of independence at the 2008 IWRF sport assembly.

Following that vote, the independence project advanced with the development of a governance model and a draft of a constitution,

business plan, and financial plans. Negotiations began with IWAS on an agreement to transfer responsibility for the sport, and with the International Paralympic Committee on the requirements for membership for the IWRF.

In August 2009, the IWRF was formally incorporated as a sport federation with the mandate to take on responsibility for wheelchair rugby. Finally, in November, IWAS authorized the transfer of responsibility.

In accordance with the agreement between IWAS and the IWRF, on January 1, 2010, the IWRF will become the international governing body for the sport of wheelchair rugby, with all the rights and responsibilities that entails. This will not lead to any disruption for the sport - all current rules and regulations will continue to be in force, all sanctioned events and championships will continue to be held. In September 2010, the IWRF will hold its first General Assembly; at that meeting, the IWRF Constitution and other governing documents will be ratified and elections will be held for the IWRF Board of Directors.

I would like to personally thank the IWAS Wheelchair Rugby Executive Committee who worked with me through this project: Brad Mikkelsen, Stan Battock, Joke Beekman, John Bishop, Cathy Cadieux, Gail Hamamoto, Cherie Harris, Anne Hart, Dan McCauley, Ross Morrison and Ken Sowden. I also want to recognize the contributions made by Judy Zelman, who was there for the start of this project, and who was my inspiration along the way.

This is the start of an exciting new chapter in the history of wheelchair rugby. There are many opportunities and challenges ahead of us, but I am confident that the global community of wheelchair rugby will continue to meet them successfully.

## Zonal Election Results

Elections were recently held at each of the three Zonal Championships. The IWRF would like to thank those people who previously served on their zones boards, and congratulate and welcome those who were recently elected. Serving on a board or committee of the IWRF is important work, and helps to assure that the needs of the athletes and the sport are the first priority.

Results of the zonal elections are as follows:

### Asia-Oceania Zone

President - Ken Sowden, New Zealand  
Classification Commissioner - Binnie O'Dwyer, New Zealand  
Technical Commissioner - Jon Corson, Australia

### Americas Zone

President - Juan Foa, Argentina  
Classification Commissioner - Emilie Newell, Canada  
Development Commissioner - Matias Costa, Brazil  
Technical Commissioner - Gilles Briere, Canada  
Secretary - Donald Lane, Canada

### European Zone

President - Joke Beekman, Netherlands  
Classification Commissioner - Sarah Leighton, Great Britain  
Development Commissioner - Robert Haasjes, Netherlands  
Technical Commissioner - Ulrica Ulfson, Sweden  
Competitions - John Timms, Great Britain





## Rugby family celebrates Olympic admission from IRB.COM

The global Rugby family are celebrating the announcement that Rugby Sevens will be included at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

An overwhelming vote in favour of inclusion by the International Olympic Committee members at the 121st Session in Copenhagen - Rugby Sevens received 81 'yes' votes to only eight 'no' votes - means that the world's top men's and women's Rugby players will have the opportunity to compete for an Olympic Gold medal, the pinnacle of sporting achievement.

Bernard Lapasset, President of the International Rugby Board, said: "This is a historic moment for our sport and for the global Rugby community, who were united in support of our campaign."

"We are excited and honoured to be joining the Olympic Games and I would like to thank the IOC members for believing in our Olympic vision and our values and recognising that Rugby Sevens is a perfect fit for the Olympic Games."

"The Olympic Games will be the pinnacle of the sport for all our athletes and the Rugby family. The best men's and women's players in the world are excited to be able to showcase their talent on the world's greatest sporting stage."

"We are now looking forward to working in partnership with the IOC to develop and implement a Rugby Sevens tournament in Rio that will reach out to new audiences and inspire a new generation of sports fans around the world," added Lapasset.



Cheryl Soon captained Australia to the first ever Women's Rugby World Cup Sevens title and was part of the IRB's team in Copenhagen.

To learn more about Rugby 7's and the 2016 Olympics, visit the International Rugby Board's website at [www.irb.com](http://www.irb.com)

**"You play sport at the highest level to challenge yourself to be the best that you can possibly be and to compete with the best from all over the world, and what better stage to do that on than at the Olympics?"**

**Sue Day, England**

## The "Rumble in Cartagena" by John Bishop

From November 30th through December 5, 2009, delegates from more than 130 countries gathered in Cartagena, Colombia to attend the "The Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World". The Convention seeks to end the suffering caused by antipersonnel mines by prohibiting their use, requiring the destruction of existing stockpiles, and obliging States to clear mined areas and assist victims.

With hundreds of high ranking politicians and VIP delegates from around the world converging on Cartagena, Juan Pablo Salazar had the great idea of introducing them to the sport of wheelchair rugby. Juan Pablo is founder of the Maximus Quad Rugby Tournament, and also oversees Colombia's wheelchair rugby program. He is a crusader for people with disabilities, and has a "can do" attitude that makes Amazing things happen.

In October, Juan Pablo met with an organization called "Survivor Corps", which helps survivors of war and violence to heal and transform communities. They are committed to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), and were attending the Cartagena Summit as part of their mission. Excited about Survivor Corps work, Juan Pablo talked with them about wheelchair rugby, and how great it would be to do a rugby exhibition during the Summit. Many phone calls and dozens of emails later, the "Rumble in Cartagena" was born and set to happen.

In the weeks to follow, a small delegation of wheelchair rugby players from the US were assembled to compete against Colombia. The vision of demonstrating rugby before hundreds of delegates and VIP's from as many as 130 nations was about to happen.



Photo courtesy of Riley Abbott  
H.R.H. Prince Mired Raad Al Hussein of Jordan (left), and Francisco Santos, Vice President of Colombia after an 8 minute scrumage

December 3rd marked the 2009 "International Day of Persons with Disabilities", and to celebrate the Colombian & US quad rugby teams squared off at the Rumble in Cartagena. Organized by Survivor Corps, ICBL, **CMC** and **Fundación Arcángeles**, this event held special significance for the audience of statesmen and NGO leaders. Among them was H.R.H. Prince Mired Raad Al Hussein of Jordan, Francisco Santos - Vice President of Colombia, and Nobel Peace Prize Winner Jody Williams to name just a few. Most of the more than 500 people who watched had never seen or heard of the sport before, but within minutes they knew they liked it. Every big hit brought the fans to their feet, and each goal was rewarded with passionate applause.

At the end of the game, dignitaries and local citizens jumped into rugby chairs and scrimmaged, providing all with a memorable and unique experience. The opportunity for the players was amazing, but more importantly it exposed rugby to hundreds of delegates from around world, and demonstrated the benefits of making sport available to all people with disabilities.

## Players Huddle by Ross Morrison

Hi all, and welcome again to the Player's Huddle of the IWRF newsletter. It has been a busy year with a lot going on! The Zonal Championships are now completed and congratulations to the winners and those who have qualified for the World Championships 2010. We will see three first timers at Worlds: Argentina, Finland and Poland, which shows just how far and fast, our sport is expanding.



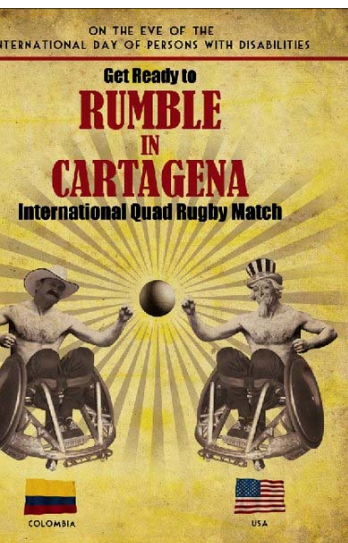
The new rules seem to have settled in well with their first year in use, and the feedback from players and spectators alike has been great. Everyone has commented on how much faster and more

intense the game has become. In the last Player's Huddle we asked you to discuss some of the existing rules that provoked a lot of debate. If there are rules or other things that you want to discuss just let me know.

The big topic of discussion from all the Zones has been the classification system, and its ongoing review. This is proving to be a long process, but with so much to consider it will unfortunately take time! Hopefully I will be able to post an update next time with more details as I know many of you have questions. These have been passed on to the people concerned. You can always post on Global Rugby Talk if there is something specific or important that you need to say.

On a final note, Happy Holidays and best of luck in the New Year! If you have any ideas, points or just about anything you would like to see in the Player's Huddle, or want something brought up then get online to [www.iwrf.com](http://www.iwrf.com) and get posting!

Ross Morrison



**CLICK HERE**  
to watch a video of the  
"Rumble in Cartagena"

**Did you know that Global Rugby Talk on the IWRF website is an ideal forum to discuss all aspects of our sport?**

=====  
**Take some time today to log on and checkout the discussions that have been started, or create a brand new topic of your own. It's fast, easy, and a great resource of information.**

=====  
[www.iwrf.com/forums](http://www.iwrf.com/forums)





## About the IWRF

The International Wheelchair Rugby Federation (IWRF) was first established in 1993, as a sport section of the International Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Sports Federation (ISMWSF). The purpose of the IWRF is to help develop, promote and regulate the sport of Wheelchair Rugby on a global basis.

Currently there are thirty countries that actively participate in the sport of Wheelchair Rugby, or who are developing programs within their nation. The IWRF can assist countries interested in establishing programs of their own in a number of ways. To request information on how we can help out please contact us.

The International Wheelchair Rugby Federation is a member of International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports (IWAS), which is formerly known as the International Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Sports Federation. IWAS is an organization which enables and supports the growth and achievements of athletes within the Paralympic movement based on the traditions of Stoke Mandeville.



## IWRF Executive Committee

**Brad Mikkelsen**, President

**Cherie Harris**, Secretary

**Cathy Cadieux**  
Vice President of Finance

**John Bishop**  
Vice President Communications

**Juan Foa**  
Americas Zone President

**Joke Beekman**  
European Zone President

**Ken Sowden**  
Asia-Oceania Zone President

**Anne Hart**  
Classification Commissioner

**Gail Hamamoto**  
Development Commissioner

**Eron Main**  
Competitions Commissioner

**Stan Battock**  
Technical Commissioner

**Ross Morrison**  
Athletes Representative

Click on any name to send that person an email.

## How the IWRF Achieved Independence

As the IWRF begins its work as an independent sport organization, we would like to take a moment to acknowledge those who have brought the sport of wheelchair rugby to where it is today.

Beginning in 1993, when wheelchair rugby was taken on as a sport by the International Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Sports Federation (ISMWSF), and later IWAS have been great supporters of the sport, helping its promotion and development worldwide. Under ISMWSF stewardship, wheelchair rugby held its first World Championships in Switzerland in 1995, participated as a demonstration event at the 1996 Atlanta Paralympic Games, and achieved full Paralympic status at the 2000 Sydney Games.



As the sport has grown, IWAS adapted the working relationship to ensure that wheelchair rugby had the support it required and the freedom to operate in the best way for the sport. Since 2006, IWAS has been a willing partner helping wheelchair rugby develop the capacity for independence that has led to the creation of the current IWRF.

## IWRF Membership

Under the terms of the Transfer of Governance agreement between IWAS and the IWRF, existing IWAS members have the option of either joining the IWRF or delegating their membership to a national wheelchair rugby organization.

Of the 24 internationally active countries, 14 have currently confirmed that they will be joining the IWRF, and have identified their members. Contact has been made with the remaining countries, and the IWRF is working with them to ensure that they will continue to be represented in the IWRF. Membership applications will be sent out to all national member organizations of the IWRF in early 2010.

## Referee debut in Poland By Lukasz Szymczak

During the weekend of 6-9 November in Lublin, Poland, and for the third time in Polish wheelchair rugby history, we organized the Championships Cup for teams that normally fight within the Polish Wheelchair Rugby League. This year no less than 13 teams participated in the championship. Since 12 years ago when wheelchair rugby came to Poland, the number of teams and players are still increasing. Over the last years we have had a league and more and more tournaments are being organized on various levels.

In conjunction with the Championships Cup, we have also had an advanced referee clinic led by the new Technical Commissioner of Europe – Ulrica Ulfson from Sweden, and Sylwia Sekowska – Head Official of Poland, whom after a one year break came back on the court.

Referees spent all day in the gym refereeing games, and at the end of the day they met and discussed the most interesting cases. In the process of the clinic Ulrica paid attention mainly on game-management.

## Teams Ready to Roll at 2010 WWRC

All twelve teams have now qualified for the 2010 World Wheelchair Rugby Championships which will be held at the Richmond Oval September 17-26, 2010.

From the Americas zone, Canada, the host, will compete alongside the United States and first time qualifier, Argentina. Qualifying from the Asia Oceania zone is Australia, New Zealand and Japan. And from the European zone, Belgium, Sweden, Germany, Great Britain, Poland and Finland will battle it out for rugby supremacy.

The tournament will attract over 400 athletes, coaches, officials, delegates and volunteers. Competition will take place on the hardwood ball courts in the centre of the Oval. Two major wheelchair rugby events at the Oval in the spring of 2009 – the Vancouver Invitational and the Canadian Championships – tested the facilities and all gave the hosts two thumbs up.

The United States will be the team to beat in 2010. They are the reigning world champions after defeating New Zealand 34-30 at the 2006 World Championships in Christchurch, NZ while Canada took the bronze with a 23-19 win over Great Britain. Canada is the

The IWRF would like to recognize in particular the work of Maura Strange, Executive Director and Secretary General of IWAS, on behalf of wheelchair rugby. For the 17 years that wheelchair rugby has been an ISMWSF and IWAS sport, Maura has provided outstanding support and guidance to the sport. This past summer she was presented with the Paralympic Order, which is the highest tribute a person connected with the Paralympic Movement may achieve. We would also like to recognize Paul dePace, President of IWAS, for his support and encouragement as wheelchair rugby has moved forward to independence.

Finally, the IWRF would like to honour the work of Pawel Zbieranowski on behalf of the sport of wheelchair rugby. Pawel brought wheelchair rugby into ISMWSF in 1993, and was the founding president of the IWRF as an ISMWSF sport section. His passion and dedication to the sport were instrumental in building international recognition of and support for wheelchair rugby. Independence for the sport of wheelchair rugby was a particular goal of Pawel's, and the IWRF is very pleased that we have now achieved that goal. Without his work from 1993 to 2002, this would not have been possible.

To learn more about IWAS and their history, visit [www.iwasf.com](http://www.iwasf.com)

Thanks to the work of Sylwia in Poland, many referees have been trained and are still increasing the number of referees, (currently 27). In Lublin, 19 referees were on courts including two referees from Sweden – Ulrica Ulfson and Philip Ulfson. For an eleven-year old boy from Sweden, Championship Cup in Poland was his first official tournament of Wheelchair Rugby.

I refereed one match with Philip, and I must state that I had no problems. He dealt very well with the lead-trial position. He was always on the spot. After the game players also said many good words about this match, and congratulated the young referee. Philip's debut certainly belongs to the most prominent of referee's successful debuts, and in the future he has the potential to become an outstanding international referee.



only team to have defeated the US, doing so at the 2002 World Championships in Sweden, where they won the gold medal, and in Athens where Canada defeated the US on their way to winning the silver medal at the 2004 Paralympic Games.



Argentina is very much a developmental team but shows great promise as they won their zone championship over Brazil. Japan has made steady improvement in the lead up to the tournament and Belgium is back in the fold after a bit of a hiatus. Australia holds the key to victory riding on the back of superstar Ryley Batt, who had his coming out party at the 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing, China.

2010 will be a busy time for British Columbia, and the sport of wheelchair rugby will be the sport to showcase as we change our focus from winter to summer Paralympians.

## IWRF Technical Commission by Stan Battock, IWRF Technical Commissioner



Stan Battock

### Changes to the Technical Commission

At the recent Zonal Championships, elections were held for Technical Commissioner in each zone. As a result of these elections we now have 3 new Zonal Technical Commissioners. Ulrica Ulfson was elected to the role in Europe, Gilles Briere in the Americas, and Jon Corson in Asia-Oceania.

I would like to thank the outgoing Zonal Technical Commissioners for their work over the past few years. Their work for the Technical Commission has at times been very difficult – but they were always thinking what is best for the game and not for themselves. Now they can relax and put their energies back into officiating to the best of their ability.

### Selection of Officials for 2010 World Championships

The Technical Commission will be inviting all IWRF qualified officials to apply for selection to the World Championships to be held in Vancouver, Canada in September 2010.

The Technical Commission has been working closely with the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) on the timeline for selection. A letter/email will be sent to all eligible officials before Christmas. This will allow the officials 4 weeks to prepare their resume and send their application in to their Zonal Technical Commissioner.



Once applications close, the selection process will take place. The LOC has requested that the names of all officials selected for the World Championship be provided to them by the end of February 2010.

For the World Championships there will be 12 referees, 4 Technical Commissioners, 1 Head Official and 1 Assistant to the Head Official – a total of 18 officials.

I would encourage all IWRF qualified officials who would like to attend the World Championships to start putting your resume together and getting it to your Zonal Technical Commissioner before the closing date for applications. Late applications will not be accepted!

Further information has already been sent to all eligible referees. If you have any questions about the selection process, please contact Stan Battock or your Zonal Technical Commissioner for clarification.

### The Forty Second Rule

With the recent completion of the three zonals championships it appears that the running of the forty second clock can create issues for games participants and the officials. As we all know, score benches are often manned by local volunteers who have not had much exposure to wheelchair rugby, and the running of the forty second clock can sometimes be incorrect. Fortunately this did not happen very often during the course of the zonal championships.

However, even with extremely competent officials, mistakes can and will happen. So the Technical Commission has ruled that if any issues arise with the operation of the forty second clock that cannot be resolved, the clock will be reset to forty seconds and the ball handed back to the offensive team.

#### Examples:

1. After a goal, A-1 make the throw-in at the end line to A-2, the referee started his 12 second count. After 5 seconds he noticed that the 40 second goal clock has NOT started yet.

*Blow the whistle to stop the game, correct the error, give back a new 40 seconds and start again from the end line and put back 5 seconds on the game clock.*

2. The ball is in front court with Team A in possession, they want to score the last goal (48 seconds remaining in third quarter of a tied game), but there is a turnover with 2 seconds remaining on the goal clock. The referee makes the signal for the reset, but the forty second operator is too late to reset, B-1 is going all by himself to score, nobody close to him, then the buzzer goes for the 40 second violation.

*The referee will stop the play, and give the ball back to Team B, in the back court, on the side line, with 10 seconds remaining in the game.*

3. A-1 is about to score, he is near the endline when B-1 taps the ball away from A-1, the ball is on the floor, B-1 tries to pick up the ball, but A-1 succeeds in regaining the ball, but the official of the forty second clock resets it when he thinks that B has gained control (a mistake). The referee sees the reset, and stops the game.

*The referee will award a new 40 seconds to Team A. and Team A will inbound from the sideline.*



iwrf.com

Do you have an upcoming rugby tournament that you want listed on the Global Rugby Calendar?  
=====  
Just drop us an email by [Clicking Here](#)  
And we'll get it listed online and in the next IWRF Newsletter

## Global Rugby Calendar

### Knock & Roll International - Jan. 22-24, 2010

West Palm Beach, Florida  
Event Contact - [Nick Priolo](#)

### Demolition Derby - Jan. 29-31, 2010

Birmingham, Alabama  
Event Contact - [Patty Cornelius](#)  
Official Website - [www.lakeshore.org](#)

### Malmö Open 2010 - February 12-14, 2010

Malmö, Sweden  
Event Contact - [Kim Bonnier](#)  
Official Website - [www.malmo-open.com](#)

### Bernd Best Tournament - March 26-28, 2010

Cologne, Germany  
Event Contact - [Sekretariat](#)  
Official Website - [www.bernd-best-turnier.de](#)

### USQRA National Championships - April 16-18, 2010

Birmingham, Alabama, USA  
Event Contact - [Patty Cornelius](#)  
Official Website - [www.quadrugby.com](#)

### 2010 Canadian Nationals - May 13-16, 2010

Ottawa, Ontario Canada  
Event Contact - [Don Lane](#)  
Official Website - [www.cwsa.ca](#)

### Real Deal Low Point Tournament - May 27-29, 2010

Karlsruhe, Germany  
Event Contact - [Peter Schreiner](#)

### North America Cup - June 11-13, 2010

Birmingham, Alabama, USA  
Event Contact - [Patty Cornelius](#)  
Official Website - [www.lakeshore.org](#)

### Canada Cup - June 18-20, 2010

Montréal, Canada  
Event Contact - [Patrick Côté](#)  
Official Website - [www.cwsa.ca](#)

### 2010 IWRF World Championships - Sept. 16-25, 2010

Vancouver, Canada  
Event Contact - [Gail Hamamoto](#)  
Official Website - [www.2010wwrc.com](#)





## Classification Report by Anne Hart, IWRF Classification Commissioner

In 2009, IWRF classifiers were busy in all zones of the world. Classifiers evaluated athletes and trained prospective classifiers in Brazil, Ireland, Poland, France, Denmark, South Korea, Argentina, New Zealand and India. We have approximately 40 active international classifiers, and our small volunteer group traveled to an amazing number of nations and covered a record number of events. Who says that a post-Paralympic year is slow?



There were three zone championships in 2009, including the first ever America Zone Championship. At European Zone Championships classifiers evaluated 72 athletes and provided education to three trainees from France, Switzerland and Austria. Two classifiers received certification. The classification panel consisted of Sarah Leighton, Great Britain, Chief Classifier; Viola Altman, The Netherlands; Lotta Krossen, Sweden; Emilie Newell, Canada; Paula Leppanen, Finland; Claire Tucak, Australia and Anna Nordahl, Sweden. Sarah Leighton was re-elected as Head of Classification for the European Zone. We thank Sarah for her service and are grateful to have her continue as head classifier for European Zone.

At the first America Zone Championships, 26 athletes were evaluated and training and education was provided to two trainees from the USA and Argentina. The classification panel included Doug Mazur, USA, Chief Classifier; Anne Hart, USA; Emilie Newell, Canada; Viola Altman, The Netherlands; Paul Easton, Canada; Patricia Beckwith, Argentina and Katie Bourke, Australia. Jennifer Stodler, Canada who has brilliantly served as Head of Classification for the America Zone for 6 years, chose not to seek re-election. We would like to thank Jennifer for her service and welcome Emilie Newell, Canada as the new America Zone Head Classifier.

At the Asia Oceania Zone Championships 31 athletes were evaluated and 5 trainees and 1 observer attended from Australia, New Zealand, Korea, Japan and Malaysia. Seven classifiers were certified or received advanced certification. The classification panel consisted of: Binnie O'Dwyer, New Zealand, Chief Classifier; Greg Ungerer, Australia, Classifier Trainer; Jennifer Stodler, Canada;

Deborah Bowditch, New Zealand; Takashi Nakayama, Japan and Kate Payern, Switzerland. Binnie O'Dwyer was re-elected to a second term as head classifier for Asia Oceania Zone. We thank her for her service and appreciate having her return to the position for a second term.

IWRF conducted a review of the classification rules for compliance with the IPC Classification Code, a requirement for membership in the Paralympic Movement. There are several areas where IWRF is responsible for developing specific written procedures in our classification rules to be compliant with the Code. These are procedural rules and not about how we define our sport classes. The areas that require work relate to consequences for violation of classification rules, language that is not consistent with the Code language, and development of an appeals procedure once IWRF is independent. This work is currently in planning and scheduled to be completed by the 2012 London Paralympic Games. Updates will follow as procedures are developed.

The review of the IWRF classification system is ongoing. Dan McCauley, chair of the working group, developed a questionnaire to gather information on the most critical areas for review and distribution at the three zone championships. The three areas identified currently are evaluation of the trunk, criteria for eligibility to compete and consistency across classification panels. A fourth area was evaluation of the hand.

At present, Dan is planning to put the survey in electronic format for posting on the IWRF website for a wider gathering of feedback from the IWRF membership. Once these critical areas are confirmed, small working groups will be put together to focus on these key areas, and will include classifiers and athlete representatives. One area identified is that of eligibility which requires further definition for IPC Code Compliance. Viola Altman and Anne Hart will be working on a proposal in this area and meeting with IPC representatives in Bonn Germany in February 2010. The plan is that a proposal on eligibility be written and distributed to the membership to meet the deadline for the 2010 meeting at World Championships in Canada.

**Did You Know that the IWRF Classification Manual can be downloaded from the IWRF website?**  
[Click Here to get your copy now.](#)

## Americas Zone Championship by Juan Foa, Americas Zone President

The first Americas Zone Championship was held in Buenos Aires from the 29th to the 31st of October. Teams from Argentina, Brazil, Canada and the United States attended, and only one spot for the 2010 IWRF World Championship was available at this tournament. Canada and the US had already qualified for Worlds, the first as the host country, and the latter as the 2008 Paralympic Gold medal winners. The one remaining spot for Worlds was going to be for either Argentina or Brazil.

In the round-robin Canada and the US showed why they are first and the third in the world rankings, beating both Argentina and Brazil by large margins. The next games were Argentina against Brazil and Canada against the U.S., which provided a preview of the expected finals. In the first match Brazil played very well and beat the local team 43 to 41, in what was a very tight game. In the last game of round-robin play, Canada felt the loss of two Canadian players who were classified above 3.5. Also missing was 2.0 Allan Chartrand, who suffered a concussion earlier in the week and was unable to play. Despite Canada's best efforts they were defeated by the US, 55-34. In the semi-finals, the US and Canada again defeated Argentina and Brazil to advance to the championship game.

On the final day of play the crowd had the opportunity to watch top wheelchair rugby in a game where the U.S. beat Canada 73-26 for the Gold Medal. With a huge home team crowd, the last game was for the Bronze medal and a spot at Worlds. The game came with lot of pressure for Argentina, who had lost their previous match against Brazil in the round-robin. Brazil led the first period 12-11 with many faults on the court from the Argentina's side. In the second period the energy of the fans helped Argentina overcome Brazil, and take a 3 point lead into the half, 26-23.



The fans were screaming like they were at a championship football game. Some had brought drums, which the beat non-stop to support their local team. People who have been involved with the sport of rugby for more than 15 years commented that they had never before seen or heard a more enthusiastic crowd at a tournament!

The final two periods were a battle of endurance with very few substitutions for either team. The stadium got louder and louder with every point the local team made, especially by 2.0 Matias Cardozo who lead Argentina in overall goals. Going into the final period Brazil trailed by 6 point (37-31), but fought hard for the remaining 8 minutes. At the final buzzer Argentina was victorious with a score of 46-43, and the crowd rushed the court to congratulate the warriors. Something never seen before was when fans lifted 2.0 Matias Cardozo over their shoulders in his rugby chair for a victory lap around the court. It was something unique for the local players who won't ever forget their first official tournament. (see more photos on page 8)

**"The fans were screaming like they were at a championship football game. Some had brought drums that they beat non-stop to support their local team"**  
  
**People who've been involved with the sport of rugby for more than 15 years commented that they had never before seen or heard a more enthusiastic crowd at a tournament!**



## IWRF Ranking List As of November 9, 2009

1. UNITED STATES
2. AUSTRALIA
3. CANADA
4. BELGIUM
5. NEW ZEALAND
6. SWEDEN
7. JAPAN
8. GERMANY
9. GREAT BRITAIN
10. POLAND
11. FINLAND
12. SWITZERLAND
13. AUSTRIA
14. DENMARK
15. IRELAND
16. CZECH REPUBLIC
17. NETHERLANDS
18. KOREA
19. SOUTH AFRICA
20. FRANCE
21. ARGENTINA
22. BRAZIL
23. CHINA
24. NORWAY

## Developing Countries

- Colombia
- Greece
- Hungary
- India
- Malaysia
- Mexico
- New Caledonia
- Portugal

## European Championships by Joke Beekman

On October 11, 2009 the Copenhagen airport was getting crowded with a large number of wheelchair users heading for the small town of Hillerød 45 minutes north of the city. Under the smoke of the famous Frederiksborg castle was the accommodation for the coming week, the Hillerød hotel. And right next door was the sports accommodation, Frederiksborg Centret.

The hotel was large, almost all rooms were on the ground level and several small seats made it pleasant to catch up with teammates and friends from other teams. Being able to wheel up and down to the sports centre was a big advantage.

The first two days were spent on training, classification and meetings. The classifiers had an extremely hard job to do; in these two days they had to classify 72 athletes, it meant working with a very tight schedule, no spare time and late dinners. The refs were tied up in two days filled with workshops and meetings to be well prepared for the job they were going to have to do during the competition.

On Tuesday afternoon there was a short opening ceremony, making everyone even more eager to start with the competition. Great Britain may have been the most surprising team present for some. In spite of well-known names on the player list, a number of more experienced players were replaced by promising newcomers, giving them the opportunity to get the well-needed experience of playing a lot of matches on this level. A small gamble maybe; but it worked out well with GB ending up on the second spot in their pool after pool play. Sweden showed a solid game throughout the tournament, taking the first spot in Pool 1. The 2 semi-finalists from Pool 2 were no big surprises either; both of them having been in similar positions at former European Championships.

With Germany losing only to Belgium in a 45-46 final score, the crossovers looked promising. The top 2 crossovers were played on Friday night; exciting games and tough matches, with Belgium and Sweden going for the gold, while Great Britain and Germany, the two finalists of the 2007 Europeans ended up battling for bronze.

The battle for places 5 and 6, also rewarded with a ticket to Vancouver in 2010, was no less exciting. Poland, winning over Switzerland by only one point was facing Austria, while Switzerland met Finland. Poland had a very tough match against Austria, winning in the end by 2, while Finland had a bit easier victory against Switzerland. At the bottom end, Ireland beat the Czech Republic, while Denmark beat the Netherlands.

On Saturday, finals had arrived. The Czech Republic started with their first victory ever at a European Championship, beating the Netherlands. Denmark came in ninth after beating Ireland. Rivals Switzerland and Austria fought a harsh battle with Switzerland taking victory 37-33. Poland showed the progress they made in their win over Finland and taking the fifth spot; their highest position ever.

The crowds gathered for the bronze medal game between Germany and Great Britain. Points were spread evenly in the first part of the game with a very solid and tactical game on both sides. Germany managed to get ahead in the third quarter and held their lead, taking the bronze.

And then it was finals time; Sweden was the predicted winner by most, with Belgium having the sympathy from most of the teams present. The battle was fierce; not a single point was given away by either team. At halftime Belgium led by 2; a lead they were determined not to give away. In the end they managed to take an additional turnover, winning the finals by three. A big disappointment for Sweden, but a great day for Belgium, taking their first European title.

After a long and exciting day for most it was time to party; enjoy the victories, forget the losses and have a beer (or two....). Looking back at the tournament, the only conclusion can be that the level of rugby in Europe has gone up. After this well organized and successful tournament we can only say; Vancouver, here we come.







## Asia-Oceania Championships by Terry Vinyard

The Asia Oceania Zonal Championships returned to the same exact city and venue where they first started back in 2001. The venue may not have changed, but so many other things had since the inaugural qualifying event. There was a different host in Canterbury Wheelchair Rugby, which was spearheaded by ex-Wheelblacks Bill Oughton and Andy Chittock, along with former Wheelblack team manager Cherie Porter. These three organized a great event between 5 countries who spoke 3 different languages, which is no easy task.

The games themselves were preceded by an opening ceremony, which is typical of many International events. Only at this one the dignitaries' and politicians had true connections to the sport. A minister mentioned how his sister was a part of the Wheelblack staff. His speech was not read off of cue cards, but from the heart. It wasn't long and drawn out to appease people who weren't there. It was concise and short, which I'm sure the Japanese and Koreans appreciated even more. As always they are so polite, clapping when everyone else does, or when mentioned they clap as a thank you.



The first showdown of the tourney came on day two, on another sunny Christchurch day. The Silver medalist from Beijing, Australia established an early lead against Japan (8th in the World) who had the first day off. The Aussie's phenomenal 3.5 Ryley Batt was nursing an injury to one of his few fingers. Australia tried to use secondary line-ups as much as possible, but Japan was able to over-match them with Batt off the court. A late Japan run at the end of the game brought Japan within one when the final buzzer sounded at 49-48 for Australia.

Day three marked a milestone for Korea, who won their first International game in their four year existence. A close game early saw the Koreans pulling away in the second half for a convincing victory over South Africa. The win essentially meant a semi-final appearance and a move up in the World rankings, while South Africa would certainly drop. Korea has been playing the

sport with 9.0 points on the floor at home, and will be moving to the conventional 8 point game next season. From my enquiry into the reason why they did this, it was a shortage of low pointers on their 10 competing teams. That's more than Australia and New Zealand put together.

The second game featured host N.Z and Japan, who have both been ranked in the top 8 of the World since 2003. Japan and New Zealand both were employing new coaches since their Beijing Games. Japan also was missing some former frontline talent like 2.5 player, Shingo. New Zealand was missing the leadership and fundamental play of 2.0 Tim Johnson who is taking a year or perhaps more off. Also gone from their Beijing squad was 2.0 Sholto Taylor out as well. It meant they couldn't utilize 2.0 standout Jeremy Tinker in his usual line up, with another class 2.0. Although a tight contest in the beginning, Japan was hurt by several contact before the whistle calls which led to turnovers while on offense. The Kiwis were able to capitalize on those errors and pull away with a 6-goal victory (51-45) in their biggest round robin game up to that point.

The fourth day would complete round robin play in the first two games, and see the semi-finals completed in the two latter games. The first game had huge reward for either Australia or New Zealand. To the victor meant a game between Korea later that day where a win would advance that team to a final. That represented a much easier path than the loser having to play a speedy Japanese squad, five hours later. Japan was able to watch the two heavyweights go at it for 32 minutes unless it went to overtime.

Australia took the early advantage and lead most of the game until falling two goals down in the 3rd period. They would have to rely on Ryley Batt to play the rest of the way as Australia recovered to take a two goal lead into the 4th quarter. A crucial hit at the top of the key by Batt who was attempting to steer 1.5 David Klinkhamer away from the goal ended up dropping the Kiwi low pointer to the



I must credit the Asian officials with the performances they put. They are so precise with their signals, which they have to be when most of them have very little command of English. They are such students of the game and want to get it right. Many of the experienced English speaking refs who have been reffing for years often get lazy with signals, or rely more on our verbal communications. The Koreans and Japanese refs were often the target of experienced players trying to lobby or influence calls. They were not influenced by this attempt and kept to their game. In huge games between Australia and New Zealand they delivered performances that any team would be happy with.

This was the first International event I have been a part of where classification rumblings haven't dominated off court conversations. Yes there were people DQ'd and changed, but missing were people shaking their heads saying how can that guy be a 2.0? How is he eligible? Why is he allowed to play? The classifiers and the referees proved you don't have get paid to do a professional job.

On a rare sunny Christchurch day, the games opened with the home side Wheelblacks ranked 5th in the world polishing off the Korean team in front of 25,000 plus fans. Okay maybe 50 plus a guide dog or two. Then Australia did the same to South Africa who was missing their strongest player from past Zonal in Lucas. Unfortunately he had to follow the money trail of W/C tennis. You can't blame this type of World Class Athlete, especially when they are often made to make a choice by funding opportunities. The Kiwis have experienced this as well in a promising quad amp who had to choose swimming over rugby. I'm sure both miss the camaraderie that Rugby offers, and undoubtedly their Rugby National teams miss them as well. S.A. and NZ don't have the luxury of a huge pools of athletes like some other countries enjoy.



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**"On a rare sunny Christchurch day, the games opened with the home side Wheelblacks ranked 5th in the world polishing off the Korean team in front of 25,000 plus fans"**



SCOREBOARD	
NZL vs. RSA	51-17
AUS vs. KOR	67-33
JPN vs. RSA	64-23
NZL vs. KOR	64-35
AUS vs. JPN	49-48
RSA vs. KOR	38-53
NZL vs. JPN	52-46
AUS vs. RSA	61-38
NZL vs. AUS	44-45
JPN vs. KOR	67-43
AUS vs. KOR	62-41
NZL vs. JPN	51-45
KOR vs. JPN	29-65
AUS vs. NZL	53-45



# The Wheelchair Rugby Press

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ground. At first the official called the vertical spin, but then progressed it to a flagrant foul. This opened the door for a Kiwi comeback.. Australia leading by only a goal coughed up the ball with 12 seconds remaining in front of their own key. New Zealand squandered a golden opportunity to tie the game, but threw away their final possession which dropped them to second in round robin play, and a date with Japan that afternoon for the right to go to the Championship.

Australia's big win enabled them to rest Ryley Batt as they easily cruised by Korea. New Zealand was eager for a rematch with Australia, but needed to go through Japan to get that final. In a very similar game to their round robin game, the Kiwis prevailed by 6-goals once again to advance to the Asia-Oceania final. These two rivals have finished one -two in all five Zonal Championships.

Another sunny day on November 9th as the Bronze medal game was won easily by Japan over their Asian neighbors. As both finalists warmed-up, the largest crowd of the weekend shuffled in. The pro-Kiwi crowd ranged from ex-Wheelblacks to local politicians. The Australian and N.Z. National anthems were played, and the Kiwis did their Haka. Perhaps it's not the oldest rivalry in the sport, but certainly the fiercest. You only have to look back to 2003 when these two powerhouses got into a shoving match after the Haka preceding the final game in Japan. In 2005 South Africa it took 4 overtimes to separate the two.

Australia won the opening tip but squandered the possession for a disastrous start that saw them fall behind 1-4. Then the Aussies recovered by going on an 8-2 run to lead 9-6 at quarter time. The Wheelblacks couldn't contain Batt defensively as he broke double and triple teams at times. Defensively he was making things happen and his teammates were there to pick up loose balls that he created. Although he only played three games, his dominant effort derailed any hopes of the Wheelblacks getting back in the game as the Australians rolled up an 8-goal win over the home team.

"The level of competition between Japan, New Zealand and us was of high standard." stated Australia's Coach Brad Dubberley. He also noted Korea's improvement since the 2007 championships.



2009 America's Zone Championship Photos





## Hungary for Rugby by Marco Dispaltro

### *The story of 8 pioneers and a United Nation style committee's introduction to the sport of wheelchair rugby*

It was a great privilege to conduct the first rugby clinic in Hungary from November 13-15, 2009 in the cities of Kemenesmihályfa and Celldömölk, which are about 200km from Budapest. I've always wanted to be part of the birth of rugby in a new country, so I couldn't pass up this opportunity.

Hungary has been involved in structured rugby for about 6 months now, and have contracted the rugby virus and are forever infected. I had no idea what to expect; did the players know anything about the rules, strategy, were they even tetra's, or was it like 2005 in Brazil where they had 12 para's that were all unclassifiable and 2 tetra's? So as always in situations like this, I think of our good friend Kevin Orr and one of his sayings "Expect the unexpected".

I arrived at the airport in Budapest from Montreal around 15:00 where Edit, the main organizer was waiting for me. We took a taxi to the youth hostel they had arranged for me and 3 others to stay on Thursday night. Later in the evening Magnus Krossen (class 1.0 from the Swedish national team and former IWRF development coordinator for the European zone), along with Lotta Krossen (level 4 classifier) and Ulrica Ulfson (international referee) arrived. After a short night we were off to pick up the last member of our team at the airport, Sofia Beloka from Greece (classifier, referee).

After picking up Sofia, we were off to Kemenesmihályfa for a 3 hour ride after which lunch was waiting for us. We ate and we were off to the gym which was within pushing distance of our lodging with some assistance. We also had some reinforcements from the Czech Republic (David Lukeš, Petr Jonák, Petr Oppenhauer, Jiří Dvořák), all ready to help out.

**The Gym:** Well, it was a hardwood floor with good lighting, but it was up 2 flights of stairs with makeshift plywood ramps. The main thing was the size of the gym! It was the smallest gym I had ever seen, 5 hard pushes and you're headfirst into the wall in any direction. After shaking my head for 5 minutes, we spoke to the organizers and they were able to get another gym, slightly bigger but more conducive for what we wanted to achieve. For future reference, if anyone wants to do a clinic make sure the gym size is 28x15 meters, or as close as possible with a hard floor. Maybe we can establish a checklist form that organizers would have to abide to.

**Day 1:** The Friday session began 3 hours late, but once we started we reviewed some basic rugby things: what can wheelchair rugby do for you, what it's meant to me and Magnus, how the game is played, brief description of the roles of each player, chair setup, introduction to the rules with Ulrica, and Lotta and Sofia spoke about classification. After supper we set up the projector and showed some rugby action and then went off to sleep.

**Day 2:** Lotta and Sofia classified all the players in the morning in a very cold gym, but all the players complied willingly to the process with great interest. After lunch we were off to the new gym (hard rubber sport court floor) for some action.

**The chairs:** The Hungarians found a local guy to make some chairs for them. The chairs have camber and decent bucket, but no bumpers, bad back upholstery with no adjustments for sling, a rib grinding back bar, illegal anti-tips, illegal height in the front (not 11cm), illegal wings, and the front and back casters looked like office chair wheels. All of the players sat too high, but otherwise the chairs were fine.

David and Magnus showed the Hungarians their own individual setups from transferring into the chair, to strapping up and everything in between. After all of the players were setup in their chairs we warmed up, stretched and started things off with different pushing techniques followed by passing and ball pickup and catching drills. We also introduced some dribbling and mobility drills. After all the basic stuff, we worked on more specific rugby drills and proceeded to show them basic offense/defense strategies interlaced with some rule explanations.



**Day 3:** Game time! All of the experienced players decided to do something really cool and give up their rugby chairs for the day and took the Hungarian chairs, which proved to be quite hilarious. Straightaway speed didn't seem to suffer much except when the caster wheels started shaking, or when the guys got hit. For everything else it was very funny.

**Tip off:** Oh my, can anybody say "deer in the headlights"? The Hungarians were pumped, but were a little intimidated at the start. After a few hits it was all business and the game was on. With new players it's always difficult for them to know where they belong on the floor, where the lines are, when to dribble, when to pass, etc.. I do believe they have a good understanding of "over and back" after 10-12 over and backs were made from even the experienced players. But they said it was to show the Hungarians what not to do!!

We made the game as interactive as possible stopping the action to explain some rules and strategy. After a very spirited effort and when the players tongues and arms were dragging on the floor, we called it a day.

Thanks to everyone who participated, the great enthusiasm of the players and instructors made this a success on every level. Hopefully the information we shared and the rugby we taught will result in Hungary having a good start and rugby will thrive in this new rugby nation.

The Hungarians face some interesting obstacles as do many new countries. Newly injured tetra's are all placed in electric chairs, and to have an active chair is quite complicated and expensive. Accessibility is poor, the economy is lagging, players have difficulty finding jobs, but other countries face the same problems and if there is a will, there's a way!!!

The next rugby clinic in Hungary should take place in April 2010. If you're interested in helping out, please contact [Marco Dispaltro](mailto:Marco.Dispaltro@iwrf.com).



**Team Hungary 2009:** 0.5 Viktor Benkő, 0.5 Zoltán Hetei  
1.0 Kristóf Oszlánczi, 1.0 Pál Kurtan, 2.0 Endre Major  
2.0 Goggly Tilai, Manager: Edit Mészáros, Coach: Attila Arday

**"All of the experienced players decided to do something really cool and give up their rugby chairs for the day and took the Hungarian chairs, which proved to be quite hilarious"**

