

TWIF

INTERNATIONAL TUG OF WAR ON-LINE NEWS APRIL 2023



Judges and recorders at the 2023 World Indoor Championship in Belfast.

With a very successful 2023 World Indoor Championship in Belfast, Northern Ireland, behind us, we are looking forward to the 2023 Seminar and Congress in Mannheim, Germany.

Some interesting debates await us during the seminar, amongst others working towards a Gender Policy which is a very complex, technical, emotive and personal matter. We will also re-look at our competition formats and weigh classes.

I believe the World Indoor Championship in Belfast was a huge success despite limited numbers and last minute withdrawals. The performance of the teams was really at a very high standard and testimony that the decision to bridge the indoor gap between 2020 and 2024 due to Covid restrictions, was the right one. The event was



viewed by a large audience via Live Streaming and I am hopeful that this event, will inspire other countries and clubs to renew their vigour for indoor tug of war and that we will see a big turn-out for the 2024 Indoors in Helsingborg, Sweden.

My thanks again to all the countries and clubs who participated, the NIR Executive and Organising Committee, and all the TWIF officials who vastly contributed to this success.

As many might know by now, I have decided not to make myself available for re-election at the

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Outgoing President Anton Rabe

coming Congress. I believe I have had my innings and that 27 years on the TWIF Exco is quite enough.

I am very grateful for the huge privilege and honour it has been to have served and to have been involved in the sport for over more than 50 years at various levels and in various capacities.

Over this period I have been part of a sport transitioning from an amateur and basic sport, to an amateur sport needing to operate in a professional environment. I do believe we box above our "weight" and that we don't have to stand back to any of the big ticket professional sports. Tug of war has developed, and will continue to build on the proud record of being able to perform at the highest level - at the scientific forefront of training, tactics and techniques as well as sport nutrition, and that it will continue to be compliant with the very tough governance and anti-doping requirements even while being within a tight budget.

I also believe that we will continue to build our global footprint with both more members and more being able to compete at the highest levels. However, our real challenge remains developing our sport on all levels - be it from a cultural and recreational level at festivals, youth and beach events with less strict rules and smaller teams - to literally "pulling" these through to top level TWIF events and on to the World Games. There is no one size fits all and a "horses for courses" mind-set is required for this.

In this regard, the IWGA has confirmed that tug of war will again be in the programme of the 2025 WG in Chengdu, China. The disciplines, weight classes and numbers will be confirmed after the formal adoption of the programme at the IWGA AGM to held early in May 2023.

I wish my successor and Exco members, officials, coaches, athletes and spectators all of the very best for the future.

I will not disappear and will continue to keenly follow the tug of war sport at all levels.

For now, all the best and God Bless.

ANTON

THE EXPERIENCE

of a TWIF judge:

Going down to this championship, I was quite nervous as one never knows how the teams are going to react to a new judge. They might be of the opinion that this lad is going to make a mistake and that it will be the teams that will suffer as a



result. Thankfully this was not the case for us as new judge's as each match going out had a centre judge and two line judges and if we were to make a mistake they were there to point it out before the next match started. As a result it left me - and the others, not too nervous. The chief judge and his assistance gave us a detailed briefing each morning as to what rules were to be observed by all - as well as by us newbies. This was a comfort to all.

I thought it was a great competition - one of the best I have been to. Hopefully we have learned a lot from the experience and will go on to be judges that TWIF will be proud of.

PJ MOORE Ireland



Chinese Taipei & Basque Country teams at the 2023 World Indoor Championship in Belfast.

THE EXPERIENCE of a TWIF Chinese Taipei judge:

This was the first time that I served as a judge for the "World Indoor Championships". It was a privilege and I felt nervous and excited at same time.



I was worried that I might make mistakes during the competitions. Therefore I asked myself to focus and concentrate at every match and avoid all of the distractions. I had to do my best as I want to be a good judge.

It was a great honor to me to work with many senior and excellent judges. Whenever I had question about the rules, they were always very patient and explained to me in detail.

There were lots of valuable experiences and lessons I learned.

I really enjoyed this competition and I am proud to be a judge of TWIF.

I would like to show my appreciation to Chinese Taipei Tug of War Association and TWIF for this opportunity. Also I want to say thank you to the TWIF General Assembly and the Northern Ireland Tug of War Association for their hard work to make this competition success.

I am looking forward to seeing you all again in Switzerland in September.

Best regards, **DENNIS PENG**

THE EXPERIENCE

of a TWIF judge:

May I first take this opportunity to praise the organisers of this World TOW Indoor Championships for putting on a show of this magnitude in such a short space of time - it was absolutely magnificent, well done folks.

From a personal point of view I was really looking forward to judging my first world tournament as a qualified TWIF judge. I had attended and competed in every single world indoor championships since Cardiff 93 and had only missed one - China 2018, as a puller for Scotland, so attending the tournament as a judge brought different challenges and emotions for me.

As a competitor what drove me was the fear of loosing and the pressure to succeed and win. Judging brought a different kind of pressure - yes the pressure to succeed and not let anyone down, but also the pressure of correct decision making at the highest level as I know what kind of sacrifice and training competitors endure. I must also at this point compliment Dave, chief judge and Angelika, assistant chief judge (see pic on the following page) for the smooth running of the tournament and explaining exactly what to look out for etc. which helped me a lot. I received quite a lot of positive feedback from various pullers which was nice and also some light hearted



banter so obviously I managed to do something right!

The phrase 'poacher turned gamekeeper' was branded to me a few times - all taken and given in jest I may add - so all in all I had a fantastic tournament and again well done to all involved.

See you all on the rope again later.

NORMAN COOK Scotland



Urko Gastearena - a new TWIF judge



During the briefing of the judges at the World Indoor Championships, Urko Gastearena (Basque Country) and the other three new judges; PJ Moore, Dennis Peng and Norman Cook, received their TWIF caps and badges after they passed the exam in Holten in September 2022.

Receiving the TWIF cap and badge means that they are officially part of the TWIF judges team.

The cap is handed to Urko Gastearena by Jost Waser, TWIF Vice President and Chairman of the Technical and Athletes Commission.

THE EXPERIENCE

from a Recorder:

When I was asked to represent England as a Recorder at World TOW Indoor Championships, I was very excited at the prospect of meeting with the TWIF family once again . . .

I began my journey to the Championships at Birmingham International Airport where I met Gavin Corden (England Judge) and we travelled together - arriving at Belfast International airport, a place I know well from my RAF days when I served across the airfield at RAF Aldergrove.

We were picked up and delivered to our hotel in Dunadry and what a wonderful surprise how beautiful the hotel and gardens were, with the Peacock and four peahens.

As the day went on more and more of the TWIF Family started to arrive and it then became very real. My roommate Ray Fray-Smith (England Judge) arrived. He certainly was a great roommate and showed me the ropes.

The first morning my alarm went off at 6h00 and Ray was not impressed - a fantastic start. After breakfast we got transported to the Jim Baker Stadium - a perfect venue for a World Indoor TOW Championships. It felt wonderful to be on the galley with the other Recorders from Northern Ireland, Ireland, Netherlands and England.

The Tournament was absolutely amazing from day one to day four. The pulling was exceptional by all teams who entered their respective weight classes. Every day was excellent. I loved Recording every day. There was lots laughter and plenty of singing with all those well-known anthems of TWIF TOW whether it's Indoor or Outdoor. The commentator is always superb and very articulate - with the history and facts of the countries taking part.

David Kitchener, chief judge and Angelika Eiermann, assistant chief judge at the World TOW Indoor Championships.



Mark Williams with Wendy Dyer, Karen Hickey and Kim Boogaard.

All these factors gave Northern Ireland an Indoor World Championships to be proud of and will stay in my heart and thoughts for many years to come.

I would like to say a big thank you to Maureen Geary (Chief Recorder) who did an amazing job keeping the Recorders all up to date and fed and watered.

I now look forward to many more Indoor and Outdoor TOW World Championships in many different Countries of the World. Let's hope Switzerland later this year and Sweden next February 2024.

MARK WILLIAMS England Recoder





Giant Causeway Needed to Bridge the Gap

In Autumn 2022 Northern Ireland Tug of War Executive threw themselves in to the gap. There was an opportunity for our small association and defending World Champion pullers to showcase Indoor Tug of War in Northern Ireland.

The gap between Letterkenny in 2020 and Sweden in 2024 seemed too large to leave unfilled for indoor pullers; it needed a solid causeway and a strong bridge.

Coming out of Covid we had rocks to hand from early January 2022. Having hosted the Indoor British & Irish Championships in the Jim Baker Stadium we had already developed strong relationships and rocks we could build on. As an executive we hastily gathered these and started our causeway. We had a strong foundation of rocks in the McKeever family Hotel group, the Jim Baker Stadium and Antrim & Newtownabbey Council. The McKeever hotel consists of 5 hotels, 4 of them within the Antrim area close to the stadium. Location and infrastructure close to airports also positively affected our preparations.

As Autumn passed and winter was nearly upon us, a meeting was

held at the Dunadry Hotel with championship planners Dan and Aukje. We concluded our meeting having made great progress, forming a Whatsapp Group and a website. We were also very aware that excluding Christmas holidays we had only 16 weeks preparation. However, behind the scenes we had been building our foundation getting

local support on board, Modo Digital, Causeway Coaches, Glenview Trophies, NI Water and our own members, officials and volunteers.

In November and December 2022 we, the NI Executive, Noel Hara, Nelson Hanna, David Telford and Roy Glenny, continued to train and take part in indoor competitions in Ballygawley and in our highly contested NI Championships in Craigavon with our own teams Garvagh, Ballyhegan and Richhill, as well as Country Club and Slieve Croob. CONTINUED



Nelson Hanna



During this time, whilst still giving our all by competing on the mats, we used the time together to continue with our plans and discuss preparations with the wider club members and officials including Davy Wilson, Hugh McFetridge, Vernon Hurst and William Montgomery. It was clear at this stage with each club containing a large number of world medal pullers and coaches, we knew the pulling would look after itself for the forthcoming championships. With the medals ordered everyone went for their well deserved Christmas break. Soon the New Year was upon us and the causeway developed a few cracks. Entries were slow and deadlines were looming.

Our pullers entered 2023 with a heavy training schedule but had the comfort of knowing that the British and Irish Championships and the next World Championships were an easy commute from their homes. With a good

weekend in Dublin at the British and Irish Championships, the NI teams showed that they were world class and we had a well deserved day off, knowing that the next time we would see the pullers would be at the Jim Baker Stadium.

We could have done with a few extra days in February but we put all our efforts into the shortest month, working hard to keep on track; juggling bookings, liaising with the hotels assuring them we would be able to fulfil our promises, as well as dealing with the practical necessities of mats, ropes and screens, and the logistics of airports transfers and visas. It was a busy month for us. First day of March, with Noel having only just laid the last load of tarmac, Aukje landed on the strong smooth bridge.

Final preparations had begun. With an 8 hour round trip to collect the mats, we relied on Tug of War stalwarts,

Danny McGonigle and Dano Gallagher, to do the heavy lifting, loading two sets of mats, sending them on their way to The Jim Baker Stadium. With only a few days to go, volunteers were on board and the teams and officials joined in the final efforts and the bridge held strong.

NELSON HANNA
NITOWA



NITOWA

OPEN CLUBS COMPETITION INDOOR BELFAST



OPEN CLUBS COMPETITION RESULTS

WEIGHT	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
500W	Jingmei Tai Sho Da(TPE)	Beti Gazte (BAS)	Ibarra (BAS)
540W	China Ansteel(CHN)	Beti Gazte (BAS)	Ibarra A(BAS)
560M	Beti Gazte (BAS)	Gaztedi (BAS)	Country Club (NIR)
600M	Country Club (NIR)	Beti Gazte (BAS)	Deel Rangers (IRE)
640M	Ayshire (SCO)	Monnickendam (NED)	Deel Rangers (IRE)
680M	Cuan Rithe (IRE)	Monnickendam (NED)	Ozoli/Livberze (LAT)
580MX	Ayshire (SCO)	Beti Gazte (BAS)	China Ansteel (CHN)
600MU23	Abadiño (BAS)	Clonmany OD (IRE)	Antsoain (BAS)
500WU23	Barriozar/Abadiño (BAS)	Antsoain (BAS)	Clonmany B (IRE)
560 MXU23	Abadiño (BAS)	Berriozar(BAS)	Antsoain (BAS)
520 JMX	Berriozar (BAS)	Antsoian (BAS)	Amaiur (BAS)

MEDAL TABLE COUNTRY OPEN CLUB

NO	COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
1	Basque County	5	8	5
2	Scotland	2		
3	Ireland	1	1	3
4	China	1		1
4	N. Ireland	1		1
6	Chinese Taipei	1		
7	Netherlands		2	
8	Latvia			1

WORLD INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS MEDAL TABLE

NO	COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
1	N. Ireland	2	1	
2	Ireland	2		1
3	Basque County	1	3	1
4	Chinese Taipei	1		2
5	Scotland		1	
5	Latvia		1	
7	China			1
7	Netherlands			1

WORLD INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS RESULTS

WEIGHT	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
500W	Chinese Taipei	Basque County	China
560M	Northern Ireland	Basque County	Ireland
600M	Northern Ireland	Basque County	Chinese Taipei
640M	Ireland	Northern Ireland	Basque County
680M	Ireland	Latvia	Netherlands
580MX	Basque County	Scotland	Chinese Taipei



World Indoor Tug of War Championships

PARKGATE, N IRELAND 2023

TWIF once again, laid on a well organised, smooth-running event and as always it was a pleasure to be there to help out. My colleague Ranita Rasman, who was understandably nervous, was introduced by me to the main organising committee and they very quickly put her at ease and by the end of the event she was almost part of the TWIF team and had a clear understanding of the techniques and rules of Tug of War!

The event was held in a “converted” indoor bowls arena which turned out to be a fantastic space and our position was such that all the athletes had to pass by us to get to the competition floor so our exposure was huge – as was their usage of us. TWIF have now got a flag for us so we can advertise our presence very easily. There is still some initial reticence to use us but once a country has started coming, they generally all follow suit. Their reticence may be because they do not always



understand that we are there for them and our service is free.

We met the Swedish delegation, who are hosting the next Indoor Championships in 2024, and it was good to be able to explain to them what we needed and how we worked, and a number of suggestions were made, which I hope we will see implemented. My main suggestion is that our presence is made more clearly to the athletes (not just the officials) and the fact that we are free - to all - could perhaps be better published.

As far as chiropractic is concerned our workload went through the usual troughs and peaks with a slow start mounting to a crescendo on Day 2 and 3 but on average we saw 25 people per day. The Basque country seems to have embraced chiropractic with open arms as they represented almost 50% of our patients. We

treated a total of 96 people with a further 26 repeat visits – almost 25% of the athlete population.

Areas of treatment/complaint were largely in line with other Tug of War events although the indoor version produces slightly different injuries as there is more stress on the calves and quads. Outdoor is more about tibialis anterior and hamstrings.

My thanks to Dynamic Tape, Mueller Sports for the tape and Renita for her hard work and diligence and my thanks to TWIF for making us welcome and once again letting us into their family.

ROB SCOTT



Rob Scott and Ranita Rasman examine an athlete. Rob is our 'home' chiropractor during TWIF events.