



International Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability

PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2008

Introduction

First of all, let me apologise to all members of INAS-FID for the long delay in preparing this newsletter. Unfortunately, my return from Japan in November was complicated by the development of a pulmonary embolism, with damage to both lungs. I am still on medication and my lungs are still not normal, but I am very much better and back in action.

INAS Executive

I am grateful to the members of the INAS-FID Executive for their best wishes, their consideration and their willingness to carry on regardless. However, there are lessons to be learnt from this experience and I will return to it when the Executive next meets in April. This meeting will take place in Prague and will provide an opportunity for the full Executive to visit the site of the 2009 Global Games.

Global Games

When the deadline for receipt of bids was reached in October 2007, there were three nations competing for the honour of hosting the 2009 Global Games. When the INAS Executive met in Japan at the beginning of November, it was decided to offer these Games to the Czech Republic. All member nations should now note that the 2009 Global Games will take place in Liberec on 5-14 July.

Paralympic Games

Despite my inability to attend the IPC General Assembly in Seoul (I was in hospital at the time, so INAS-FID was represented by its Vice-President, Bengt Lindsted), I am pleased to be able to report IPC's agreement to join with INAS-FID in a joint effort intended to secure the re-inclusion of ID athletes in Paralympic Games in time for London 2012. A joint working group has been established (with Miguel Sagarra, Yves Vanlanewijck and Pieter van de Vliet representing IPC; Jennifer McTavish, Kennet Frojd and myself representing INAS-FID; and independent chairmanship provided by Gudrun Doll-Tepfer) and the group's first meeting took place a few weeks ago. As expected, the primary concern of this first meeting was the group's terms of reference, the challenges ahead and the timetable necessary to secure the participation of ID athletes in London. However, all participants were impressed by the new spirit of optimism and the obvious commitment to finding a solution to the problems that have been such a feature of the past 7-8 years. Both parties (INAS-FID and IPC) recognise the need for all barriers to the involvement of ID athletes in training and competition to be removed at the earliest opportunity and this will almost certainly be a dominant feature of the group's next meeting.

ID Basketball

No matter which other sports are contested by ID athletes in London 2012, sadly ID basketball is unlikely to be one of them. Although IPC officials were willing to consider its re-inclusion, INAS-FID was unable to demonstrate that ID basketball was practised by a sufficient number of member nations and, as such, it failed to satisfy the requirements of Paralympic competition.

World Championships

During 2008, there will be INAS World Championships in the following sports:

- 5th Indoor Athletics Championships – Estonia – March
- 4th Cross Country Championships – Poland – April
- 3rd Cycling Championships – Portugal – May
- 4th Open European Athletics Championships – England – June
- 2nd Half Marathon World Championships

Additionally, there are a number of Regional Championships taking place throughout 2008. The full calendar can be found at www.inas-fid.org

As usual, I wish all concerned every success.

Special Olympics

During October, I attended the World Special Olympics in Shanghai and was able to meet with several of the leading personalities within Special Olympics International, including Timothy Shriver. Our exchanges were cordial and positive, with both parties keen to explore opportunities for future collaboration.

Secretariat

Since the changes to the Secretariat last April, more than 260 new athletes have been registered to compete in INAS competition. Revised timescales for registration come into effect on 1st April 2008, and an updated set of guidelines to the registration process will be published shortly.

The Secretariat continues to be extremely busy, particularly in the build up to major events and I call upon all member nations to check registration and other information carefully before sending it to the Secretariat to avoid unnecessary workloads and delays.

The INAS website is now updated regularly and will continue to grow over the coming months.

One Year On

As April approaches, I am acutely aware that my first year as President is almost over. It has been a steep learning curve, with many surprises along the way. I have been warmly welcomed throughout INAS-FID and I am both grateful for and hugely impressed by the commitment to our athletes. However, I have been less favourably impressed by the number of problems, weaknesses and challenges that, even now, stand in the way of our ability to offer ID athletes the quality of service that they so obviously deserve. I am not despondent ... these challenges can and will be met ... but our future success requires the engagement of the whole membership (not just the Executive) and this is a theme to which I will return in my next newsletter.

With very best wishes ...

Bob Price
INAS President