

2023 New Year Message from the BISFed President

Dear BISFed Members,

It is a pleasure once again to report to our Members on your Federation's activities during the past year. Now that most Covid-related restrictions have been relaxed, it is particularly pleasing to be able to report following a year with a very full competition programme.

You may remember that at the beginning of the Covid Pandemic in 2020, your Board resolved that BISFed would attempt to emerge from the crisis stronger than we were at the beginning. I believe we have achieved that objective and that we can continue to face the future with confidence.

World Boccia Competitions

BISFed – sanctioned competitions: During 2022, we sanctioned 11 competitions including 5 Intercontinental Challenger Competitions; 3 World Cups; 1 Regional Championships; the European Para Youth Games and the World Championships. We are most grateful to all the hosts for supporting us in staging these events. The African Regional Championships in Johannesburg was the first to be held in this newly established Region, and we are hopeful that it will be a catalyst for growing boccia in Africa. We were pleased to support the Pajulahti 2022 European Youth Games in Finland where over 40 athletes competed internationally for the first time. The year ended with the spectacular Rio de Janeiro World Boccia Championships, brilliantly hosted by ANDE our Member in Brazil. The event returned to the Cariocas arena, scene of the 2016 Paralympic Games; 40 countries and 169 athletes competed for our highest honours, with 15 countries winning medals. This competition was a real demonstration of how strong boccia now is.

Paralympic Games: We continue to meet regularly with the Paris 2024 Organising Committee to prepare for the next Paralympic Games, and I am confident we can look forward to another spectacular Games. We have also submitted our application to the IPC for boccia to be included in the Sport Programme for the Los Angeles 2028 Paralympic Games and expect to hear the outcome early in 2023.

2023 Competition Schedule: We have recently announced our biggest ever programme of 14 sanctioned competitions for 2023 including four Regional Championships (direct Qualifiers to the 2024 Paralympic Games) and the first World Boccia Youth Championships in Povoá, Portugal. Details of all these events can be found on our website www.worldboccia.com.

The bidding process for competitions in 2024 has opened and we encourage Members to consider bidding to host an event (details of how to bid have been sent to members.)

Strategic Plan 2023 – 2028

An early task for the newly elected BISFed Board was to refresh BISFed's Strategy which will guide our work over the next four years. We developed a draft document which was discussed during video conferences open to all our Members. Having taken account of the feedback provided by Members, we finalised the strategy in September under the headline Vision: **'Boccia: THE Sport for All'**. The Strategy outlines the work we plan to do under four themes:

1. **Growth:** which will involve increasing our Membership; taking boccia to new geographical areas; developing boccia at grassroots level where it can have a positive impact on peoples' health and well-being, especially in schools, and growing the game as a leisure activity everyone can enjoy, however young or old and whatever their ability.
2. **Sustainability:** in the broadest sense, making sure that boccia has the resources and people properly trained and motivated to support our growing competition schedule; that succession plans are in place; and that we do everything we can to minimise our impact on the environment.

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3. Excellence: which means we will do everything we can to excel: on the field of play; in how we present our sport; and in providing opportunities for athletes to compete at the highest level.

4. Good Governance: under which we commit to govern boccia in a professional and transparent way, adhering to the best principles of corporate governance and expecting all associated with the sport to behave in a spirit of fairness and high ethical standards.

Membership

Membership has remained relatively static during 2022, partly owing to the pandemic, but also to more difficult global economic circumstances. We currently have 72 Members in good standing with a further five Members not in good standing because of unpaid Membership fees. In addition, Russia remains suspended until the resolution of the Russian state's invasion of Ukraine; as a consequence, Russian athletes and officials are not permitted to enter any BISFed-sanctioned competitions.

We have welcomed Egypt, Kenya, Rwanda & Uzbekistan as new Members of BISFed family during 2022 and the target in our new Strategic Plan is to have 100 Full Members by 2028.

Technology

During 2022 we implemented the updated Boccia Competition Management System (BCMS) which is used at sanctioned events to manage all aspects of the competition including seeding, draws, timing and results. The BCMS also provides detailed competition information through the internet in real time. In early 2023 we will release a version of the BCMS on licence for Members to use at their own competitions.

Committees

Our Committees continue to do valuable work to ensure our sport remains up to date, relevant and focused on the needs of our athletes. Some of the key matters the Committees have dealt with are:

- **Competition and Rules Committee:** Athlete slots for all the BISFed competitions were allocated in accordance with the Competition System; the Competition and Ranking Manual and the Boccia Rule book have been updated and clarified where necessary; and a new Q&A page has been added to the website to help answer Members' questions.
- **Referees Committee:** International Referees for the 11 competitions were selected and appointed; the Committee continues to improve the referee evaluation process; the Referee Procedures manual was updated to incorporate rule clarifications; the Committee delivered three International Referee courses and 11 new International Referees have passed the course; and the Committee is working on how referees with disabilities can be supported.
- **Classification Committee:** Classifiers were selected and appointed for all the 2022 competitions; the Committee has responded to requests for comment in connection with the IPC's Classification Code Review and has completed the IPC's Classification survey; and we have delivered three Basic Classification Courses during World Boccia competitions.
- **Development Committee:** The Committee has delivered six webinars on a variety of subjects (such as Coach Development; warm-up best practice; creativity during practice.)
- **Bids Committee:** Has evaluated all the bids received for 2023 competitions; approved all contracts for hosting sanctioned competitions; and updated the BISFed Covid-19 protocol.
- **Anti-Doping Committee:** Established a new Therapeutic Use Exemption Committee and appointed a new Chief Medical Officer to lead on Anti-doping and medical issues.
- **Athletes Committee:** The Committee has continued to provide input to the Board; a new Committee of six athletes, was elected during the Rio de Janeiro 2022 World Boccia Championships and will start work in the New Year.

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I want to thank a number of senior Committee members who have served BISFed for many years and have recently retired from their positions. They have all given freely of their time and expertise and together have made an enormous contribution to how boccia has developed:

- Gary vander Vies who has chaired our Competition and Rules Committee since we established BISFed;
- Elsa Matthee who has been the Chair of the Classification Committee since before BISFed was established;
- Heather Lowden who as Chair of our Development Committee has lead on innovating how we educate the boccia world on best practice;
- Chris Wagg, who as a long-standing member of the Competitions Committee has provided much of the intellectual input to how our Competition System and World Ranking System operate.

Thank you all for helping to make our sport what it is today.

Finance

I am pleased to report that your Federation remains in a good financial position. Once again, the annual audit inspection revealed no weaknesses in our controls. I would like to thank Jon Morgan our Vice President and Treasurer for his work keeping our finances sound. Full financial statements will be presented at the 2023 General Assembly in the normal way.

Our People and Partners

I want to thank our secretariat, Katie Ribeiro, Dom Tremblay and Gustavo Alvarim, who work so hard to manage our affairs and answer Members' questions, and your elected Board who give up their time to attend competitions, Committee meetings and Board meetings. We were delighted to appoint our first Chief Executive, Paul Trayner in October. Paul joins us with a very strong c.v. in the sporting world and will be primarily responsible for leading the delivery of our new Strategy. I am sure you join me in welcoming Paul to the world of boccia.

Regrettably, Katie has decided she needs a new challenge and will be leaving BISFed early in 2023. I want to thank Katie for all her hard work. We will miss her and wish her well in the future.

In response to a Resolution by our last General Assembly we have appointed an Advisory Board of three senior individuals in the boccia world: Joaquim Viegas, Martin Lam and Sunghee Kang who are available to the Board for consultation on important matters and I thank them for their time and expertise.

We continue to benefit from professional and commercial support without which it would be more difficult to manage our work, and I thank our legal advisors, Hogan Lovells, our Marketing and Branding consultants, Giant Arc and our key commercial sponsor, the Carrier Corporation of Korea.

Lastly I want to thank our wonderful volunteers, our Committee members, our Technical Officials who travel to competitions to officiate and make sure our sport is played in a fair and professional way and of course all those who help our athletes as carers and assistants.

In Closing

Sadly for me, this will be my last annual report to our Members. I have had to inform the Board that due to an ongoing medical situation, I will be unable to commit the time necessary to carry out my responsibilities as your President over the next year. We have therefore agreed that I will, in accordance with our Articles of Association, hand over my role to our Vice President, Jon Morgan in the first quarter of 2023. I am confident that with the strong team we have, this will be a simple and smooth transition.

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It has been a privilege and a pleasure to be your President these last ten years. I have met wonderful people, witnessed amazing sport and made so many friends around the world. I have enjoyed every minute and I thank you all sincerely for your friendship.

May I close by wishing you and our wonderful sport of boccia all the best in the years to come.

With my kind regards,



David Hadfield OBE
President

20th December 2022