

Online via Zoom
11 January 2025

2024 IPCH Sport Congress

1. Welcome & Opening

1.1. Official welcome

- IPCH Chairperson Fabio Rodo welcomed everyone and went through housekeeping items and the voting process.

1.2. Roll Call

IPCH SPORT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE and STAFF

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|----|---------------------------|---|
| 1. | Fabio Rodo | IPCH Chairperson |
| 2. | Danni Hillbrandt-Mogensen | IPCH Vice Chairperson and IPCH Development Officer |
| 3. | Anna Rossi | IPCH Technical and Classification Officer &
IPCH Competition Officer |
| 4. | Seppe Hemerijckx | IPCH Communication Officer |
| 5. | Meghan Hines | IPCH General Secretary |

DELEGATE WITH VOTING RIGHTS:

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|-----|---------------------|---|
| 1. | Jasmi Ahonen | (FIN) |
| 2. | Anders Berenth | (DEN) |
| 3. | Emmett Britton | (CAN) *not present at time of roll call but present after |
| 4. | Dick Cochius | (NED) |
| 5. | Chantel Bongiovanni | (AUS) |
| 6. | Martin Wenger | (SUI) |
| 7. | Julian Delgado | (ESP) |
| 8. | Radka Kucirkova | (CZE) |
| 9. | Andrea Piccillo | (ITA) |
| 10. | Seppe Hemerijck | (BEL) |
| 11. | Julian Wendel | (GER) |
| 12. | Margit Kasemets | (EST) |

DELEGATE WITHOUT VOTING RIGHTS:

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------|---|
| 1. | Alexander Elkaer Ibsen | (DEN) |
| 2. | Matthew Vocino | (CAN) *not present at time of roll call but present after |
| 3. | Jules van der Heijden | (NED) |
| 4. | Kieran Watts | (AUS) |
| 5. | Veronica Conceicao | (SUI) |
| 6. | Mateo Delgado Zalles | (ESP) |
| 7. | Iva Zemkova | (CZE) |
| 8. | Luca Alessandrini | (ITA) |
| 9. | Gerd Autenrieth | (GER) |
| 10. | Ervin Sirk | (EST) |

1.3. Adoption of Agenda

- The Agenda was adopted as proposed.

2. Minutes previous Sport Assembly

2.1. Matters arising from the minutes

- Nothing to be amended.

2.2. Adoption minutes 15th Sport Congress, Online

- No Objections. The previous meeting minutes – Online 2022 – were adopted as proposed.

3. Looking back on 2024

(Full details included in the presentation slides. Highlights outlined below.)

3.1. IPCH 2024 Highlights

- Danni Hillbrandt-Mogensen discussed highlights of 2024 including officials training courses, Powerchair Hockey Day and several competitions.
- Meghan Hines provided a review of the European Championships 2024 and highlights as well as opportunities for improvements

3.2 Game Management and Application of Game Rules

- Discussion proceeded regarding how it was felt that the games were getting rougher during the European Championships 2024.
- Margit Kasemets (CZE) - commented that it is tough to have games this rough as newer players may feel like they have to play that way and may not want to.
- Chantel Bongiovanni (AUS) - commented that she was at the competition and feels the same and received comments from others in Australia who were also watching.
- Anders Berenth (DEN) - agrees that the games have gotten rougher since 2018 and some of the rules have helped reinforce this.
- Kimmo Virtanen (Referee) - agrees to some extent but not that all games were too rough. Difficult to comment without having specific examples of where the referees should've made more calls.
- Anna Rossi commented that while the tolerance was higher amongst referees, players were also playing rougher so responsibility on both sides. Suggested pulling together examples of situations where it was felt to be rougher so then officials can review and we can come up with a common ground.
- Dick Cochius (NED) - advised in the chat that referees are there to draw a line to what amount of contact is allowed.
 - Martin Wenger (SUI) - Switzerland agreed in the chat
 - Gaetano Glorioso (Jury Member) - agreed with Martin. Felt that the line for rules needs to be decided on and needs to be clear. Also felt that contact made to players who have their head attached to the headrest should be called as a foul.
- Kristoffer Stormack (Referee) - feels that while things may have gotten rougher it is important to bring this outside of the competition not have the discussion in the competition as not always clear on the motivation for the concerns raised. Doesn't want to go back to 2010 where there were too many stoppages in play and impacted the game. Suggested perhaps the smaller field may have played a part in the contact. Also advised that as a referee look at what caused the contact not necessarily what the resulting impact. For instance someone flipping their chair.
- Alexander Ibsen (DEN) - even if allowed rougher play on the field still more stoppage in play as people need to adjust in their chairs. Also as a player, feel they need to respond in the same way and the manner that the other teams play.

- Chantel Bongiovanni (AUS) and Veronica Conceicao (SUI) agreed with Alexander in the chat.
- Gerd Autenrieth (GER) - agreed with much of what Kristoffer said and also believed that the more advanced powerchairs are contributing to it. As a coach they don't tell players to play more aggressively. Need to find a balance for playing hard and being safe.
- Fabio Rodo thanks everyone for their feedback and comments. Agrees with Kristoffer that it isn't really something that can be discussed during a competition but as the SEC finding a balance between athletes being free to play and also the safety of the athletes. Added that the new Athletes and Coaches Committee would also support by reviewing and providing feedback on how this should be approached going forward.

3.3 Speed control and application of tolerance

- Anna Rossi discussed the evolution of the speed control and how we have reached our current state of speed control and the tolerance. Shared some data regarding speed control from recent competitions. Shared that generally, players who received red cards used sportchairs that were not manufactured by the more widely known sportchair companies. We continue to research and find a more reliable speed control and one that can measure speed in real time during the game.
- Jeroen Kemp-Pals (Jury) - added that putting a tolerance in the game rules would limit future innovation.
- Dick Cochius (NED) - commented that given it is a smaller field at the EC felt that can't compare the speed.
- Luca Alessandrini (ITA) - asked in what period the data was taken. Wiebe van Kempen (Jury) confirmed that the data is from the entire competition.
- Discussion in the chat about the current speed control not being accurate enough as the speed control is meant for powerchair football.
- Anna Rossi advised that the purpose of the data that was displayed was to reinforce that players weren't playing within the tolerance in most cases. Agreed that tolerance wasn't mentioned during the EC technical meeting however this was practice from 2013.
- Voting resulted in a tie vote. To make a change, 50% +1 is required so no change will be made.
 - Nations voting for tolerance in speed control (6) - Finland, Canada, Switzerland, Spain, Germany, Estonia
 - Nations voting for no tolerance in speed control (6) - Denmark, The Netherlands, Australia, Czech, Italy, Belgium
- Concluded that more research and discussion will take place to see how we can implement enhancements to the speed control.

3.4 Classification

Procedures

(Full details of proposals included in the presentation slides. Comments from SEC outlined below.)

- IPC is releasing by the end of January the new IPC classification code. We are conducting a review of the classification code and will incorporate feedback when conducting this review. Being part of World Abilitysport, IPCH needs to align to the IPC standards. As such there are some standards that IPCH cannot change. In terms of procedures we have some more flexibility that we can look to incorporate some feedback.

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- Received proposals from The Netherlands regarding Classification. Discussed the proposals.
 - Expansion of Classification Opportunities
 - While we could make events like the World Championships have zero classification that would require all national teams must commit to participate or organize international competitions, that is clear in international standards. International classification can only happen during international sanctioned events.
 - A lot of national competitions are played with different rules.
 - Clear in the standards that there is no way that national classification can take the place of international classification.
 - Safety and equality for players
 - Confirmed that it is currently in the manual that only 1 person plus an interpreter is allowed in classification. Jury and Classifiers have been more flexible at times with people coming in to support with transfers or other needs. However, agreed that can go ahead and move forward with following the rules more strictly.
 - Classification outcomes are taken from the new international standards, results need to be provided as soon as reasonably possible after classification session or observation assessment. In future competitions we will try to see where we can provide results more quickly.
 - Rules for classification changes and protests
 - Implementation of changes as to happen on both sides, both those that positive and negatively impact a player. Not fair to have different procedures for raising and lowering classification, needs to be consistent.
 - In the case of athletes with a FRD status the code states that the Classification Panel must set a date (no earlier than the end of the current calendar year or season, as applicable) after which the Athlete must attend a new Evaluation Session at the Next Available Opportunity (the Fixed Review Date). For athletes with a Review with a Fixed Review Date (R-FRD) status, the athlete may compete in Covered Competitions up until the Fixed Review Date, but thereafter must complete an Evaluation Session prior to competing at any further Covered Competition - it is clear that there has to be a new complete evaluation session whenever the set date for review comes to end.
 - Opportunities to protest
 - A Protest is when an objection to an Athlete's Sport Class (and never Sport Class Status) is officially made by a National Body, NPC or by the International Federation/committee.
 - National Protests can only be filed at or by the time specified in the sport specific rules - at the competition or venue designated for athletes evaluation.
 - The IF or committee can instead file a protest any time and anywhere.

- Therefore for a National Team there is currently no opportunity according to the IPC Code to file a national protest outside of a competition.
- Information about Protests and Appeals were provided using materials from the free online education tool from IPC. This education is very interesting and all coaches and athletes should be aware of this and consider going through the 4 modules. It might be that this tool could be mandatory in the future to ensure a proper education about rights and responsibilities of athletes related to classification.
- Leveraging existing expertise
 - This is a common practice by IPCH - leveraging best practices from other sports but we do need to customize and make everything sport specific.
- Advised that IPCH SEC and Classification Committee will take these into consideration
- Chantel Bongiovanni (AUS) - changes to having national classifications stand would be detrimental to nations outside Europe as bringing classifiers to nations outside Europe like AUS would be extremely difficult and costly.

4. IPCH

Structure

(Full details included in the presentation slides. Highlights outlined below.)

4.1. Restructuring IPCH Committee

- Fabio Rodo discussed the updated structure to help create more efficiencies. Proposed structure for the Sport Executive Committee would be:
 - General Secretary - keep as is
 - Classification & Competition Officer - keep as is but group all Officials committees under this Officer. The Competition Committee will be responsible for education of the Technical Delegates. Training of all other officials will be the responsibility of the Officials committee.
 - Development Officer - keep as is
 - Communication and Media Officer - keep as is
 - Fundraising & Sponsorship Officer - new role where support is needed
- The IPCH Athletes and Coaches Committee would report to the SEC and have the responsibility of supporting the SEC overall.

4.2. Athletes and Coaches Committee

- This committee would help have a closer connection with the players and coaches and gather feedback. This is a new initiative and we will evaluate as it goes.
- A member of the committee can attend the SEC meetings to have a voice, not a vote but a voice.
- At the time of the Sports Congress, 7 individuals put their name forward to participate in the committee.
 - Maxime Decrock - BEL
 - Francesco Ostellari - ITA
 - Alessandro Franzò - ITA
 - Andreu Graupera - SPA

- Lucas Schell - NED
- Mikel Villanueva - ESP
- Noe Spirig - SUI
- Advised that if others wanted to participate they could reach out to the SEC to share their name.
- In 2026, there will be a vote for those that would participate, but for the next 2 years it will be an open call to participate.
- One of the first tasks for this committee to look into is the review of the game situations from EC 2024 (as per the earlier discussion in the meeting). Providing specific examples of where things went too far in the committee's opinion. Asked for people to share video clips via the committee email by January 30th, 2025.

5. IPCH Rules and Regulations

(Full details included in the presentation slides. Highlights outlined below.)

5.1. Motion for Rule 504

- Details of motion included in presentation slides. Shared the motion as presented by Germany which proposed that protection must be placed around all driving wheels on sport chairs. Motion was seconded by Belgium, Switzerland, and Spain.
- Anders Berenth (DEN) - discussed that having protection wouldn't make it better, it is really more-so a matter of how rough the games are. Having the protection doesn't guarantee that the same situations wouldn't happen. Also tougher for newer nations that don't have the formal sport chairs.
- Jasmi Ahonen (FIN) - commented that they don't have this issue in Finland so don't feel this is an issue of the chairs but it is an issue of game management.
- Emmett Britton (CAN) - agreed that it is more so about game management. Also agreed that it would pose challenges with newer nations who don't have the resources to add the protection.
- Julian Wendel (GER) - didn't agree with Anders point regarding the wheel protection not helping reduce dangerous situations.
- Dick Cohius (NED) - didn't feel it should be voted on during the meeting since it wasn't sent ahead. Anna Rossi advised that it was only sent very recently and since this motion has been brought up 2 times before and so didn't see any issue in raising it at this time. Individuals can vote for, against, or abstain. Fabio Rodo commented that this motion was included in the agenda and no one proposed changes to the agenda when asked earlier in the meeting.
- Anders Berenth (DEN) - had a question related to how soon the officials would provide decisions on how this would be implemented (if it is adopted). Anna Rossi advised that if adopted it would be expected to be confirmed in the next 2 months.
- Voting proceeded which resulted in majority voting not to make any changes to the rules. at this time.
 - Nations voting to adopt the motion (5) - The Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, Italy and Belgium
 - Nations voting against adopting the motion (6) - Finland, Denmark, Canada, Australia, Spain, and Estonia
 - Nations that abstained from voting (1) - Czech

5.2. IPCH Organizers Regulations

- Document was sent ahead of time, Anna Rossi provided a high level overview.
- There were multiple documents so took the opportunity to put Competitions and Events under one regulation and to simplify the regulations. Also looked to other sports for best practices.
- Voting - asked if anyone was against the adoption of the new Organizers Regulations. No one against, no one abstained. Confirmed that the regulations have been adopted unanimously.

5.2. IPCH Competition Regulations

- Document was sent ahead of time, Anna Rossi provided a high level overview. SEC reviewed and tried to simplify and remove outdated parts and find alignment with the game rules.
- Updated the section within the World Championship to have a maximum of 10 teams with the use of wild cards (following the discussion with the nations last year) and adjusted the requirements for the drawing system. Updated the use of wild cards for regional championships and requirements for the Qualification Tournaments.
- Voting - asked if anyone was against the adoption of the new Organizers Regulations. No one against, no one abstained. Confirmed that the regulations have been adopted unanimously.

5.3. IPCH Classification Manual

- Updates underway and waiting on documents from IPC to incorporate. The final document from IPC should be available January 2025. Goal is to have the manual released in May 2025 and can be used in the Fall Dutch tournament. May look to hold a meeting to explain the updates.
- Updates to the manual will more be theoretical not practical so no need to vote and the new manual won't impact current classifications.
- The updated Masterlist from the EC will be released in the near future.

5.4. IPCH Operational Regulation

- Pending updates from World Abilitysport that are currently under review to be able to update these regulations.
- Most updates will be related to operational things like voting and meeting requirements so a meeting to review likely not needed.

6. Road to the WC2026

6.1. Competitions, tournaments and educational opportunities calendar

- Danni Hillbrandt-Mogensen provided an overview of upcoming opportunities.
 - Pilsen Powerchair Open - will include education days and coaching clinic.
 - APHC Powerchair Hockey camp - will include referee course.
 - Skorpions Varese Club Tournament - will include referee development group, Jury course and Referee Observer course (TBD).
 - Dutch Nations Cup - IPCH sanctioned tournament so results will be valid for the WRL. Will include Classification course, Jury Course and Referee Observer (TBD).

6.2. IPCH World Championship 2026

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- Provided an overview of the venue and what available during the tournament.
 - Officials arrive May 23rd, 2026, team delegates arrive May 24th, 2026 and departure date is June 1st, 2026.
 - High level timelines provided in the presentation. Dates may adjust depending on when the drawing ceremony will take place. Opportunity to potentially be flexible on the payment schedule if required.
 - Reviewed the qualified nations:
 - Denmark, The Netherlands, Italy, Australia, Canada, Switzerland, Germany, Finland, Belgium and Spain
 - SEC decided the use of Wild Card spots would be by WRL. This was decided as at this time there aren't any other nations outside of Europe that are active enough to leverage these spots for. The purpose of Wild Card spots is to help the development and enhancement of other nations, therefore deferred to the WRL.

8. Official Closing

- At the end of the Sport Congress, Fabio Rodo thanked everyone who participated in the 2024 Sport Congress.
- Encouraged everyone to reach out to anyone on the SEC should they need assistance or have any questions.