

# TWIF 60th Anniversary

## ON-LINE NEWSLETTER

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**ANTON RABE**

*President 2015 to date  
Treasurer 1996 - 2016*

## Foreword

It is a real privilege and honour to write this foreword on TWIF's 60th anniversary.

To be one of only six persons to have held this position over a 60 year period, is really an achievement which is testimony to the dedication and commitment of my predecessors.

I would therefore like to thank and acknowledge them for their incredible service to the tug of war sport internationally. I believe this position is not sought or aspired to – it seeks you!

Having been on the TWIF Exco for more than 24 years, I have witnessed TWIF's development as an amateur sport with ever growing financial, governance and compliance requirements. This means that the sport needs to be administered within the same regulatory environment and complexities as professional sports. Our challenges are the same and we have to make things work with much less resources – financially and otherwise.

I am therefore particularly proud that through the many volunteers contributing so selflessly of their time and themselves be it at club, national or international level, and be it as judges, recorders and coaches, we could develop a very high level of presentation and performance at our international championships and multi-sport events such as the World Games. We don't have to stand back

for anybody, but we need to increase the bar even further. Over the years TWIF has had to overcome some very tough challenges, which - with the vision and leadership of successive Exco's, we managed to deal with.

No challenge was bigger however than dealing with the impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic that we currently face. With the big-hearted approach and assistance from various countries seeing the proverbial bigger picture, we could find middle ground and solutions going forward which will effectively mean that we will physically only be able to celebrate our anniversary as our 60th plus 1 in 2021!

My heartfelt thanks for generations of athletes, officials and administrators for taking TWIF from its humble and small beginnings in 1960, to a sport with a global footprint today - a sport that proved that it could join us as a global family; where in our isolation, we were linked in

*My best wishes for the next decade and beyond.*

*I am convinced that the foundations that have been laid, and the legacy of the many legends of our sport, will be the backbone for future success and growth.*



*Top, Anton, Glen Johnson and Cathal McKeever during Congress 2015 in Malmö. Above, Anton and Dariusz Bajkowski meeting Polish Minister of Sport in 2017 (in relation to the World Games). Left, Anton speaking at World Indoor Championships, Letterkenny, February 2020*

so many ways through our love for this fantastic sport. TWIF managed to adapt and adjust its competition structure and rules materially especially this past ±20 years. The demands of entertainment, instant gratification and a hungry media will enforce further changes. We need to embrace these changes and new technologies towards an even brighter future without compromising the basic ethos and principles fundamental to this ancient sport.



# Current and Past TWIF Exco Members



**TWIF EXCO 1983** Above - Peter Edlin, Koos Botha, Co Koren, George Hutton, Tommy Elmore. Photo taken in Engelberg, Switzerland.

**TWIF EXCO 2015** Anton Rabe, Treasurer; Maaïke Hornstra, Vice President; Cathal McKeever, President; Glen Johnson, Secretary General and Dariusz Bajkowski, Senior Vice President. Photo taken during the congress held in 2015.



**TWIF EXCO 1964** Above left: Back row left, Fugi Fuchs; and fourth from left, George Hutton. Front row left, Rudolf Ullmark and next to him in the centre Tage Andersson. Photo taken during the Balting Games of 1964 in Malmö Sweden.



**CONGRESS 1999** Above right: The retirement function of Peter Baker (England) as TWIF Senior Vice President - held in Swakopmund, Namibia. Anton Rabe, Peter Baker (retiring from TWIF ExCo), Louis van Zijl and Carel Botha (all 3 from South Africa).



**CONGRESS 2015** Left: Cathal McKeever thanking Tony Martin, who retired as TWIF Senior Vice President at the function held in Malmö Sweden.

**THE CURRENT TWIF EXCO** Dan McCarthy, Treasurer; Anton Rabe, President; Maaïke Hornstra, Secretary General; Jost Waser, Vice President and Pete Dyer, Senior Vice President. Photo taken during the congress held in 2019 in Getxo, Basque Country.





# TWIF

## Member Countries and Year of Membership



- |                        |                     |                |                  |                       |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Australia 1977         | Chinese Taipei 1997 | Ghana 2012     | Laos 2008        | Nigeria 2004          |
| Basque Country 1976    | Colombia 2011       | Greece 2004    | Latvia 1994      | Northern Ireland 1965 |
| Belgium 1992           | Congo 2012          | Haiti 2018     | Lithuania 2003   | Pakistan 1985         |
| Brazil 2012            | Czech Republic 2007 | Hong Kong 2007 | Macau 2007       | Philippines 1991      |
| Brunei Darussalam 2008 | Denmark 2016        | Hungary 2012   | Malaysia 2014    | Poland 2007           |
| Cambodia 2008          | Dominican Rep 2012  | India 1982     | Malta 2007       | Romania 2011          |
| Cameroon 2005          | England 1960        | Iran 2004      | Mauritius 2007   | Russia 2005           |
| Canada 1983            | Estonia 2010        | Ireland 1968   | Mongolia 2004    | Scotland 1981         |
| Channel Islands 1973   | Finland 2018        | Israel 1983    | Morocco 2007     | Serbia 2008           |
| China 1997             | France 1976         | Italy 1975     | Myanmar 2010     | Sierra Leone 2010     |
|                        | Gambia 2014         | Japan 1985     | Namibia 1988     | Singapore 2007        |
|                        | Georgia 2016        | Kenya 1997     | Nepal 2007       | Slovakia 2018         |
|                        | Germany 1974        | Korea 2000     | Netherlands 1964 | South Africa 1971     |
|                        |                     |                |                  | Sri Lanka 2007        |
|                        |                     |                |                  | Sweden 1960           |
|                        |                     |                |                  | Switzerland 1965      |
|                        |                     |                |                  | Thailand 2012         |
|                        |                     |                |                  | Turkey 2007           |
|                        |                     |                |                  | Ukraine 2007          |
|                        |                     |                |                  | USA 1979              |
|                        |                     |                |                  | Vietnam 2007          |
|                        |                     |                |                  | Wales 1968            |
|                        |                     |                |                  | Zambia 2007           |
|                        |                     |                |                  | Zimbabwe 2012         |



**CO KOREN**

*Honorary Life  
President TWIF*



## TWIF Memories from Co Koren

In 1975 my club participated in the first TWIF World Championships in Doetinchem (NED). At the time I was club Chairman and then was asked to represent the Netherlands - so I attended the TWIF Congress 1976 in Monte Carlo where I met President Fugi Fuchs, and George Hutton 'a real English gentleman' who was the Chairman. He invited his Swedish colleague Tage Anderson to a meeting in London where they founded TWIF. I then became Secretary General of the NTB. The TWIF Championship 1978 (Dundalk) was my second, and as I had more time to observe the matches I was shocked at how the rules were interpreted by many judges and how the teams could get away with many violations. At the TWIF Congress 1979, I stated that either the judges interpret the rules in the correct way, or I would advise all teams to train at violating the rules. George Hutton agreed and we formed a Technical Committee (TC) to define the uniform interpretation of the rules. Our report was accepted by the TWIF ExCo and the selected judges for the European Championship 1979 in Jonkoping (SWE) were instructed on the interpretation of the rules, which are still part of the current rules. In GAISF, President Fuchs joined the group of non-Olympic sports, who were seeking options to create a multi-sport event for the World Games. In a meeting in Seoul (Korea) in May 1980, this group founded the World Games Council (IWGA) and Fugi became Vice President.

*The GAISF meeting held in Monaco in 1980 -  
from left to right Fugi Fuchs, Tage Andersson and Co Koren*



In 1980 I was elected TWIF Vice President and became involved in preparing the tug of war sport for participation in the first World Games in Santa Clara USA. Participants were hosted for the full period of the event, so being first on the programme gave us time to enjoy the World Games as spectators and supporters. The TWIF Championships 1983 in Cape Town was the last event under the Presidency of Fugi Fuchs. At Congress 1983 in Engelberg, the Constitution - which I had revised on request of TWIF - was accepted and I was elected President and was asked to join the Financial Committee. Later that year (1989) I was elected Secretary General of the IWGA at the AGM in Budapest, so I had to share my time between TWIF and IWGA. Two years later I was elected into the GAISF Council, which made the balancing act of time sharing even more complex! To boost the tug of war sport, there were some topics that I felt essential; the Olympic recognition, the structure of TWIF, the promotion of the sport as well as proper competition management. It was satisfying when TWIF obtained provisional recognition in 1999, followed by full recognition two years later. But even with this, the IOC did not stop escalating the requirements and the last years before my retirement in 2007, were largely focused on recruiting new member associations with the result that TWIF eventually complied with the IOC requirement.

Many projects however could only be realized after we had obtained Olympic recognition with the associated financial support from the IOC. In 2001, I realised my ambition of creating promotional material and an instruction video on training and judging. This material has now been converted from tape into DVDs, which are still easily available. In the eighties the drawsheets had been written by hand after the weighing and thus took a lot of time. In 1991, I introduced a computer programme that was capable of inserting the results and it is with some pride that after I retired in 2007, the programme was converted and adapted into a web application, which is still in use. I will always keep sweet memories of the 'after competition' sessions of TWIF Championships that mostly included a small group of judges and reps. After the nineties, many old friends such as Torgny Falck and George Hutton retired from TWIF. Fortunately, these informal sessions did not vanish with their retirement - only the participants changed over the years. Looking back at the names of the TWIF and IWGA committee members in 1983, I come to realise that I am the only 'survivor'. I am apparently 'the last of the Mohicans' - so I either started very young, or I am now very old! Either way, I certainly hope to enjoy future TWIF and IWGA Jubilees.





CATHAL MC KEEVER M.B.E.

*Honorary Life  
President, TWIF*

## TWIF Memories from Cathal McKeever

**W**hen I took part in my first senior tug of war competition in 1959 at the age of 17 little did I realize what a significant part this sport would play in my life.

In 1968 I joined the Northern Ireland Association and took a team to the 1969 Europeans in Fermoy. In 1970 I witnessed a Northern Ireland team take the 640K gold medal at the Crystal Palace arena in London. I was appointed Northern Ireland team manager for the 1971 Europeans in Gothenburg and in 1978 was elected as TWIF representative for Northern Ireland, a position I held for many years. In 1978 I first met Co Koren when we brought teams from our respective associations to an international club tournament in Illerkirschberg. We won the 640K and Co's team won the 720K. In June 1979 I took a northern Ireland squad to the Mid West USA, where we spent almost

three weeks engaged in coaching and competitions. The tour was organized in conjunction with Bob Pulfer and Glen Johnson, the latter becoming a long time colleague and friend. Indeed friendships on that trip developed to the extent that several mid westerners continue to visit Northern Ireland to this day. 1980 was an important year as we hosted the first TWIF Judges course in Northern Ireland. I was involved in the early organization which led to the formation of the initial TWIF Judges panel. Later that year I took a Northern Ireland team to Australia at the request of Vic Grieves, whom I had met in Sweden a year earlier. In 1985 I was appointed to the TWIF Technical Commission upon which I served for 20 years, much of it as Chairman. I had acquired a good working knowledge of the technical aspects of

*Ballyegan Tug of War 1959 - with  
Cathal in the centre of the back row.*



Sweden in 1994.

I became Vice President in 1990 and then Senior Vice President in 1999. In May, 2007 Congress in Sweden elected me as TWIF President, only the fourth in 50 years. This was one of the highlights of my sporting life. Attendance at the Olympic Congress in Copenhagen in 2009 made me realize how important it is for us to regain our Olympic status again. Then in 2011 the TWIF Congress, reappointed me as President for a further four years.

Unfortunately I suffered a stroke in 2015 and was forced to stand down, a decision which was a very painful one indeed, especially as tug of war has been such an important part of my life for 60 years. Apart from family I consider that one of the greatest blessings in my life has been meeting so many good people from such a diversity of cultures and backgrounds, many of whom have become enduring friends.

I consider myself extremely fortunate. Finally, I wish to extend my best wishes to all the TWIF family with the hope that the years ahead will bring further expansion and the return of our beloved sport to its rightful place on the Olympic Programme.



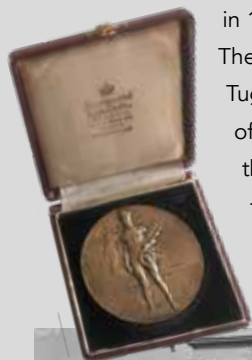
*Group photo of the Congress in 2011*

# TIMELINE TWIF

## 1960 - 2020

### 1900 - 1920 TUG OF WAR IN OLYMPICS

(including 5 Olympic Games and one unofficial Olympic Games in 1906 in Athens). The IOC decided to remove Tug of War (and a number of other team sports) from the programme in order to reduce the number of sports and participants in the Olympics.



OLYMPIC GAMES IN 1920



**1960 TWIF ESTABLISHED** 24 September. The founders were Sweden and England. The meeting resulted in the following conclusions:

- to form an International Organization to control and develop Tug of War;
- to agree on a common set of rules for competition at all international matches;
- to work together to develop the Tug of War Sport in other countries;
- that Tage Andersson should act as President and Bill Hillyard as Secretary General;
- to arrange an international competition between England and Sweden;
- to appoint the officers of the International Organization at the next meeting.

**1961 THE FIRST TUG OF WAR MATCH** between England and Sweden at the historic and memorable location of White City in England, where the Tug of War Competition of the 1908 Olympic Games had taken place.



**1964 FIRST INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT** in Malmö Sweden as part of the Baltic Games, that celebrated their 50th Anniversary. Founder countries Sweden and England as well as the Netherlands and Denmark participated. England won 720 kg class (see above).



**1965 FIRST EUROPEAN OUTDOOR CHAMPIONSHIP** in London (England). Only men's teams competed (above).

**1975 FIRST WORLD OUTDOOR CHAMPIONSHIP** in Doetinchem (Netherlands).

**1979 FOUNDING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMISSION** to define the uniform interpretation of the Rules.



**1980 WOMEN'S TUG OF WAR** was a demonstration sport at the WC Outdoor in Basel, Switzerland.



**1981 FIRST WORLD GAMES** Tug of War was and still is on the Programme. Tug of War was one of 7 founding members. The first World Games were held in Santa Clara, California, USA. Only Men's teams participated in an outdoor competition. Great Britain won gold in the 640 kg class and Switzerland gold in the 720 kg class.

**1983 NEW COMPOSITION OF TWIF EXECUTIVE (EXCO)** with 5 members: President, Secretary General, Senior Vice President, Vice President and Treasurer.



**1984 PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN** at a Tug of War Championships. This was at the WC Outdoor in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, USA. It included club teams only.

**1985 WORLD GAMES LONDON** (England). Only the top 6 countries per weight class qualified for participation. Competition was the 640 kg and 720 kg class.



# TIMELINE TWIF

## 1960 - 2020 CONTINUED

**1986 DOPING CONTROL** introduced at Tug of War Competitions. First National Women's teams competition at the World Championships in Slagharen, Netherlands.



**1988 PARTICIPATION OF JUNIOR PULLERS** at Tug of War Championships. WC Outdoor was in Malmö, Sweden. 1988 was also the Year TWIF started to make a TWIF Newsletter and for that a Public Relations Commission was established.



**1990 WORLD OUTDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS** in Slagharen, the Netherlands; when the World Indoor Championships were introduced, only one day of open Club Competition.



**1991 FIRST WORLD INDOOR TUG OF WAR CHAMPIONSHIPS** in Getxo, Basque Country. *(Pic above)*

**1993 INTRODUCTION OF WOMEN'S TEAM** at the World Games in The Hague, first as an indoor demonstration sport in 480 kg class.



**1995 FIRST OCEANIC CHAMPIONSHIPS** in Adelaide, Australia. Only 2 further events held – in 1997 in Hartenbos, South Africa and 1999 in Swakopmund, Namibia.

**2001 WORLD GAMES 2001** were in Aki-ta, Japan. To honour the host country, 600 kg indoor and 680 kg outdoor for Men were on the programme.

**2002 TWIF WAS FORMALY RECOGNIZED** by the International Olympic Committee being the governing body for Tug of War world wide. Today in order to be on the programme of the World Games an International Federation must be a member of ARISF (Association of Reconized IOC Sport Federations) recognized by the IOC.



**2003 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ANTI - DOPING COMMISSION**



**2005 WORLD GAMES DUISBURG** Germany. Indoor Competition for Women became official part of the World Games after three times demonstration Sport, but only in one weightclass, 520kg. The Women of Chinese Taipei *(above)* have won the gold medal at the World Games at every competition since 2005. For men the weight classes were 640 and 680kg.

**2008 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ATHLETES COMMISSION** on instigation of the IOC. **2010 WORLD OUTDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS**

in Pretoria, South Africa, during which individual weigh-in was introduced. Only one weigh-in happens on the day before the championship, instead of every morning before the start of the competition. The Mixed class was also introduced during these Championships, consisting of 4 Men and 4 Women. Since 2012 this class has also been on the programme of the World Indoor Championships.



**2011 FIRST WOMAN** was elected in the TWIF ExCo *(Maaïke Hornstra above)*.

**2016 THE TECHNICAL COMMISSION AND ATHLETES COMMISSION** were amalgamated to the Technical and Athletes Commission (TAC).

**2020 – TWIF 60TH ANNIVERSARY**



# TWIF CHAMPIONSHIPS HELD SINCE 1960

## EUROPEAN OUTDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS:



*EC 1965 London*



*EC 1997 Jersey Judge*



*EC 2007 Minehead*



- 1965 London (England)
- 1968 Borculo (Netherlands)
- 1969 Fermoy (Ireland)
- 1970 London (England)
- 1971 Göteborg (Sweden)
- 1972 Barry (Wales)
- 1973 Nottingham (England)
- 1974 Engelberg (Switzerland)
- 1977 St Helier (Channel Islands)
- 1979 Jönköping (Sweden)
- 1981 Folkestone (England)
- 1983 Dundalk (Ireland)
- 1987 Wexford (Ireland)
- 1989 Rimini (Italy)
- 1991 Stans (Switzerland)
- 1993 Minehead (England)
- 1995 Getxo (Basque Country)
- 1997 St. Helier Jersey (Channel Islands)
- 1999 Slagharen (Netherlands)
- 2001 Bütschwil (Switzerland)
- 2003 Assen (Netherlands)
- 2005 Cento (Italy)
- 2007 Minehead (England)
- 2009 Assen (Netherlands)
- 2011 Minehead (England)
- 2013 Assen (Netherlands)
- 2015 Belfast (Northern Ireland)
- 2017 Southport (England)
- 2019 Castlebar (Ireland)

*Left EC 2017 Men England*



*EC 1971 Garvagh represented Northern Ireland in Gothenburg, Sweden - 640 kg took Silver*



*EC 2017 England Judges*



*EC 1999 Koapmanboys during Slagharen, Netherlands*



*Left, EC 1999 Latvia | Above, EC 2005 Cento, Italy*



*EC 2019 Lady Sweden, Castlebar*





*WC 1968 Netherlands*



*WC 1976 South Africa - Germany 5th place in 640 kg*



*WC Outdoor 1976 Cape Town - bronze 640 kg Switzerland*



*WC 1976 South Africa - Republic of Transkei*



*WC 1980 Basel - England World Champion 640 kg*

## WORLD OUTDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS:

- 1975 Doetinchem (Netherlands)
- 1976 Cape Town (South Africa)
- 1978 Dundalk (Ireland)
- 1980 Basel (Switzerland)
- 1982 Cape Town (South Africa)
- 1984 Oshkosh (USA)
- 1985 Stans (Switzerland)
- 1986 Slagharen (Netherlands)
- 1988 Malmö (Sweden)
- 1990 Slagharen (Netherlands)
- 1992 Mosney (Ireland)
- 1994 Uppsala (Sweden)

- 1996 Slagharen (Netherlands)
- 1998 Rochester (USA)
- 2000 Blackpool (England)
- 2002 Pretoria (South Africa)
- 2004 Rochester (USA)
- 2006 Slagharen (Netherlands)
- 2008 Stenungsund (Sweden)
- 2010 Pretoria (South Africa)
- 2012 Appenzell (Switzerland)
- 2014 Madison (USA)
- 2016 Malmö (Sweden)
- 2018 Cape Town (South Africa)



*WC 2000 Blackpool - Ladies Belgium*



*WC 1984 Oshkosh Nuarbe, Basque Country - Gold 560 kg*



*WC 1986 Slagharen Netherlands*



*WC 2000 Blackpool, Switzerland*



*WC 2014 Madison, Ireland*



*WC 2018 Cape Town - Germany*





*WC Indoor 2018 Xuzhou China*



*WC Indoor 2018 China, St. Pat's*



*WC Indoor 2018 China*

## WORLD INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS:

- 1991 Getxo Basque Country
- 1993 Cardiff (Wales)
- 1995 Vitoria Gazteiz (Basque Country)
- 1997 Torbay (England)
- 1999 Carlow (Ireland)
- 2000 Slagharen (Netherlands)
- 2002 Cork (Ireland)
- 2004 Glasgow (Scotland)
- 2006 Killarney (Ireland)
- 2008 Faenza (Italy)
- 2010 Cesenatico (Italy)
- 2012 Perth (Scotland)
- 2014 Castlebar (Ireland)
- 2016 Volendam (Netherlands)
- 2018 Xuzhou (China)
- 2020 Letterkenny (Ireland)



*WC Indoor 1991 Getxo, Basque Country*



*WC Indoor 1991 Getxo 1991, Basque Country*



*WC Indoor 2018 Xuzhou China Basque Team*



*WC Indoor 2020 Letterkenny Ireland Youth*



*WC Indoor 2020 Letterkenny - Dutch Team*



*Right WC Indoor 2020 Letterkenny Ladies Chinese Taipei*



*Far left, WC Indoor 1991 Getxo, Basque Country*  
*Left, 2012 Perth Scotland Medal*  
*Right, WC Indoor 1991 Getxo 1991, Basque Country*  
*Far right, WC Indoor 2020 Letterkenny Ladies Germany*







1981 World Games Santa Clara



World Games 1993 The Hague, Switzerland



World Games 2005 Duisberg



World Games 2009 Kaohsiung - Irish team



World Games 2001 Akita - Ladies Australia



World Games 2001 Akita

**WORLD GAMES:**

- 1981 Santa Clara (USA)
- 1985 London (Great Britain)
- 1989 Karlsruhe (Germany)
- 1993 The Hague (Netherlands)
- 1997 Lahti (Finland)
- 2001 Akita (Japan)
- 2005 Duisburg (Germany)
- 2009 Kaohsiung (Chinese Taipei)
- 2013 Cali (Colombia)
- 2017 Wroclaw (Poland)

**OCEANIC CHAMPIONSHIPS:**

- 1995 Adelaide (Australia)
- 1997 Hartenbos (South Africa)
- 1999 Swakopmund (Namibia)



World Games 2013 Cali Colombia Gold Netherlands 680 kg



World Games 2009 Kaohsiung, Sweden



World Games 2005 Duisberg - Germany Team



World Games 2017 Wroclaw, Judges



Medals World Games



# MODERN TOW ON INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

GAUTAM KAUL  
*President ATWF*



In modern times when we talk of Tug of War we tend to drift to its origin in the Middle Ages. The temptation is partly a compulsion - as we find it difficult to present hard evidence to trace the game before modern times. We thus tell our audiences that the game was part of the selected ones played in the first Olympics held in Athens in 1896. In this list the nations mentioned exclude the people of the Indian Subcontinent - who are only mentioned in the second edition of the Olympics in 1900. The game of Tug of War remained part of the games until 1920 when an objection was raised in the IOC that it was not being played in all the continents of the world that represented the five Olympic rings and so should be kept out until the game was properly introduced in areas of all five continents. The spread of the game was slow because its promoters lacked direction. But with some strange good luck on the Indian Subcontinent, the game found its patrons - and that was the training department of the British Imperial Armed Forces based in

Calcutta (now Kolkata). Folklore suggests that some time around 1880 when a contingent of British Militia was stationed in the fort of Chandernagore, south of Calcutta, some British officers ventured out into rural countryside in the festive Season of Lights and found themselves in the middle of village fairs - witnessing the proceedings of tug of war games going on. Since the game represented both body coordination, and good physical strength, the British officers adopted the game into their regular training programme and moved a proposal to formulate a set of rudimentary rules of play for future games to follow. We can now see that wherever contingents of its Militia moved into new colonial areas, the game of tug of war went along - being played within the ranks and among the officers in the military messes. Its popularity grew in leaps and inter-battalion competitions came to be organized.

(See pictures above).

In the beginning there was racial discrimination between the ranks in the Indian army. The British soldiers lived separately and played their evening games in different marked areas, but they all enjoyed a common audience. When the ordinary soldier retired from military service and returned to his village, he carried the knowledge of the games and training routines and introduced these to his private life. The game of Tug of War took roots in many villages where it was not played earlier. As British army units were deployed the world over during the WWII, the game of Tug of War also spread. By 1945 the game had patrons in areas that today are Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and India. In 1947 when the Sub continent was divided, the game slid in interest in other areas but remained firmly grounded in India.

# HAPPY 60TH BIRTHDAY TWIF!



**A** great sporting nation, France nevertheless occupies a very modest place in the world of Tug of War hierarchy. This situation does not preclude ambition however, as the objective is clear: to progress and restore the reputation of Tug of War as a sport. You don't have to be old to have memories!

FNSMR (Fédération Nationale du Sport en Milieu Rural) has only been a member of TWIF for a few years. A short history, but enough to have been able to weave bonds of trust and friendship around a common passion and objective: the development of tug of war in the world!

In 2016, the club of "Jeux Bretons Casson" in Brittany participates for the first time in an international competition: the Outdoor World Championships in Malmö, Sweden.

In Casson, tug of war has been practiced for many years. The club is one of the best in Brittany. Their technique is good, the training is regular and they are motivated. *But it's going to become complicated.* Because, in Brittany, we pull barefoot - but TWIF World Championship is with shoes! The technique is radically different. Casson is going to learn it at his expense with a ranking that only has the positive perspective of progress. But the essential is elsewhere. Casson has certainly discovered the world top level and a great pulling technique. But Casson has above all discovered TWIF! During these few days spent in Sweden, the French guys were able to put to the test the values claimed by the International Federation: solidarity, goodwill, mutual aid and friendship. These values are carried by all the nations, clubs and teams - and by the judges who know how to show goodwill and magnanimity in front of the French approximations. Casson's experience in Malmö was received as a great welcome message! Since 2016, Casson has participated in all the international campaigns of the outdoor championship. *The progress is real as is the pleasure!* In 2020, for the first time, France planned to send 3 clubs and nearly 30 pullers to Getxo for the 2020 World Championship. The pandemic ruined everything. But the motivation is intact! We'll be there in 2021 with sporting performance objectives of course, but above all, great meetings and international friendships.

*These are the values of sport! These are the values that TWIF has held high for 60 years and will still have for a long time in the future! Happy Birthday TWIF !!!*

# BEST WISHES FROM BASQUE COUNTRY

**B**asque Country feels very honoured to be a member of TWIF in its 60th anniversary. We first joined TWIF in 1976 when we had a different status, but from 2014 when we got our new status, we have felt more focused in the sport - forgetting other older issues. This current status gives us a way to be able to contribute to the working developments that are being implemented by TWIF - ways to boost certain key strategic lines in the coming years.



An important stage for this new period will be next year in Getxo, Sokatira Mundiala 2021, we are looking forward to being the host of all of the TWIF family, different Clubs, Countries and officials and in some way hope to be able to give back all we have received.

We will see you in Basque Country at the next Outdoor Tug of War World Championship!!!!





# SPECIAL GREETINGS FROM ITALY ...



Italy became a TWIF member in 1975. Since then 3 different Federations have alternated to represent the Italian Tug of War in the world.

FiGeST, affiliated since 2001, is proud to be a member of this important Federation.

We remember the European Outdoor Championships

organized in 1989 in Rimini and in 2005 in Cento and the World Indoor Championships organized in 2008 in Faenza and in 2010 in Cesenatico.

Italy is one of the candidates chosen to organize the World Outdoor Championships scheduled for 2026. We always work with the spirit of increasing the visibility, participation and popularization of our sport -

ensuring a more streamlined and appealing format to the media who are trying to help TWIF take that useful step to return to the glories of the early 20th century when our sport was an Olympic discipline. We know very well that this is the main goal of TWIF and our hope is that with the help and strength of all the Members this can happen in the near future. We also hope that more nations will join TWIF.

Finally, we send a special greeting to President Anton Rabe, thanking him for the work done so far, renewing our best aim for the future to him and to the Executive Committee and good work to all.



Tug of War in the United States has a long history. From our humble beginnings in which local towns had Tug of War teams to today when we have teams competing around the world. **We would like to wish TWIF many more years of progress and success.**



# CONGRATULATIONS HAPPY JUBILEE!

BRUNO BISCHOF  
*President Swiss Tug of War  
Association*



**H**appy Jubilee! If one were to illustrate 60 years of TWIF – with all the experiences, the blood, toil, tears and sweat the Swiss rope pullers have put in – then this would be comparable with the 3.5 meters tall and 250 kg rope puller statue from the 2012 World Championships in Appenzell made out of pure steel.

*The Swiss Tug of War Association would like to congratulate the Tug of War International Federation on its 60-year jubilee and wishes that it has many further successful years in the future.*

## 60 YEARS OF TWIF

Dear All,  
From the Netherlands we would like to congratulate the board and all of the TWIF committees on their 60 year anniversary. An amazing milestone which unfortunately, due to COVID-19, cannot be celebrated in an appropriate manner. Let's hope this changes soon in the coming year so that we will find a way to toast this anniversary after all.  
In 2019 the Dutch Tug Of War Federation had also existed for 60 years which means that we have been a part of the TWIF family since the very beginning. In the past, and at this very moment, members of the Dutch Tug Of War Federation have been involved in the board and different TWIF committees. To name two, Co Koren as the chairman of the TWIF and currently Maaik Hornstra as the TWIF secretary. All these members have given their valuable knowledge, but also the other way around, they brought home helpful insights to fit in our own Dutch Tug Of War Federation strategy.



An anniversary is often a moment in which we look back in the past and commemorate. We believe it is also an excellent opportunity not just to look back but also to look forward and find new ways to develop the beautiful tug of war sport in the coming years. There is a famous Dutch saying; "Wie de jeugd heeft, heeft de toekomst". Freely translated this means that the youth holds the future, and that is also where our focus should be, to improve the under 18 and under 23 categories. Not only should we keep our existing youth members excited and involved, we should also do our upper best to attract new members. To chairman Anton Rabe, board members and members of the various committees, we would like to congratulate you once again on this 60 year anniversary and we welcome you with open arms to the World Championships in Holten in 2022.

Stay safe! With kind regards,  
**BOARD AND MEMBERS OF THE DUTCH TUG  
OF WAR FEDERATION**

## LATVIA'S BEST WISHES

**L**atvia wishes TWIF a long and successful future. Latvia was the first Eastern Europe country that became a member of TWIF in 1994 with the support of Sweden's Tug of War Federation (Carl Erik Hagström, Carlerik Malm, Lars-Åke Berggren and the Swedish Tug of War clubs) and the support of Tommy Elmore. We had our first success at the 1998 World Championship in Rochester, USA, when Tug of War Club Velkonis got a gold medal, but our most successful Championship was in Pretoria, South Africa in 2002 where we received 4 gold medals. We hope TWIF becomes more visible, with new ideas - paving a successful way to becoming an Olympic sport.





# GERMANY'S BEGINNING AT TWIF

GUNTER H FAHRION



**E**ven though the German DRTV only joined in 1974 as the 11th member of TWIF, the Germans have a long tradition in Tug of War. The association Deutscher Athleten Bund (DAB) was founded in 1891 and had participating sports; boxing, wrestling, weight lifting, judo, sportsacrobatic, rasenkraftsport as

well as the disciplines hammer throw, weight throw and stone throw and Tug of War (Tauziehen). The German Championships in 1913 hosted all sports together in one weekend. The granting for autonomy of the olympic sports members caused the dissolution of the DAB in 1968. Rasenkraftsport founded his own Association in 1971, Tug of War joined them in 1973. The German Association DRTV Deutscher Rasenkraftsport- und Tauzieh- Verband was born. The driving force behind Tug of War in those days was Hermann Hirsch. Living close to the border he had excellent connections to Switzerland. He applied for TWIF membership on 16 November 1973 which was ratified by Congress on 20 April 1974. These pioneers had a stony way to go. At their first international competitions in 1974 and 1975 they lead the classification from behind. But that motivated the 640 team to prepare for the 1976 World championships in Cape Town, South Africa. Officially the Bundesrepublik Deutschland denied any financial support for the team, because of the weak results in the past and also so not to support the apartheid politics of the hosting country.



But Switzerland and the TWIF president Fugji Fuchs helped by chartering a whole plane with 220 persons in total, 60 from Germany. German athletes payed 1.400 Deutsche Mark, Supporters 2.400 Deutsche Mark each. One of them from Buch was even their priest. Under his protection the club team from Buch came close to enter the semis and came 5th. After this unexpected success the coach of Buch told the chronist: Next Worldchampionships we like to wear the German national triko, not our club trikot. After this it again took nearly 30 years before the German athletes got financial support from the German State, but already two years later the German DRTV provided a national trikot for the team.

# ENGLAND TOW ASSOCIATION

**W**e are very proud to be a founder member of TWIF and we have continued as an active member throughout those 60 years. We would like to congratulate TWIF, current and past, for the tremendous growth in the sport over the 60 years with over 70 member associations. We have seen many changes over those 60 years with a significant change in pulling style and technique. The ultimate goal is still to return to the Olympic games nevertheless, achieving Olympic recognition and for TWIF to be a founding member of the World Games is a great achievement in itself. While Europe was the founding continent for TWIF it is great to see the sport has developed in other continents, not least, in recent years, in Asia where they have become a force to be reckoned with in the indoor sport and are developing fast in the outdoor sport. It was good to see Asia host a Championships in 2018 and scheduled to host another in 2022.

Clearly there is still much work to be done and the Coronavirus pandemic has hit our sport hard as it has with many others, we are yet to see the full impact, nevertheless, in many countries we were already dealing with the challenge of reducing numbers in our sport and with TWIF we all need to look outside the box for options to take our sport forward through the next 60 years to ensure we make the Olympic Games and are able to celebrate the next 60 years.

**MICK COPPER**

*Hon General Secretary*



# TWIF Sports Partners

Since its founding TWIF has tried to promote the sport world-wide.

To achieve the highest level in competition and to develop the sport, TWIF became member of the following Sport Partners:



## WADA

### World Anti-Doping Agency

WADA is a foundation initiated by the International Olympic Committee based in Canada to promote, coordinate and monitor the fight against drugs in sports.



## IOC

### International Olympic Committee

The IOC is a non-governmental sports organisation based in Lausanne, Switzerland. Founded by Pierre de Coubertin and Demetrios Vikelas in 1894, it is the authority responsible for organising the modern Summer and Winter Olympic Games. Tug of war was on the Olympic programme until 1920 and were recognised as an International Federation by the IOC in 2002. It remains TWIF's ambition to return to the Olympic programme.



## SPORTACCORD

is a not-for profit global sport business event organisation focused on driving positive change internationally and dedicated to engaging and connecting international sport federations, rights holders, organising committees, cities, press and media, businesses and other organisations involved in the development and business of sport.



## IF FORUM

**International Federations (IF) Forums** are held regularly under the auspices of SportAccord focussing on different topics, groups and geographical areas within international sport.



## ARISF

### Association of IOC

Recognised Sport Federations. ARISF mission is to unite, promote, represent and support the IOC Recognised International Sport Federations in reaching their objectives, co-ordinate their common interests and goals while preserving their autonomy, and to ensure dialogue with the IOC and GAISF in order to support their objectives, to co-ordinate the sharing of knowledge and to service and educate its members on current issues of the wider sports movement. TWIF joined ARISF in 2001 after official recognition by the IOC.



### GAISF - Global Association of International Sports Federations

GAISF is the umbrella organisation for all international sports federations as well as organisers of multi-sports games and sport-related international associations. GAISF is an international sport organisation with 95 full members and 20 associate members. TWIF joined GAISF in 1975.



## IWGA

### International World Games Association

Founded in 1980, the International World Games Association (IWGA) is a non-governmental and non-profit-making international organisation constituted under Swiss law. Made up of International Sports Federations, it administers a quadrennial and multidisciplinary sports event, The World Games. The principal aim of the IWGA is to develop the popularity of the sports governed by its Member Federations, to improve their prominence through excellent sporting achievements, and to conserve all the traditional values of sport through The World Games.

TWIF is a founding member of the IWGA and participated in all World Games events to date.



**TWIF**  
1960 - 2020

## MISSION STATEMENT

As an International Federation our mission is to provide the structure and good governance necessary for the well-being and development of the sport of Tug of War throughout the world.

Our Primary Objective is to attain a sufficiently high level of excellence and universality to expedite our acceptance by the International Olympic Committee as a sport within the programme of the Olympic Games, a status held by our sport in the early years of the 20th century.

The photographs that we have used for this newsletter have come from many sources. Thanks especially to Eddie van Raamsdonk, Gunter H Fahrion and other TWIF members.

[www.tugofwar-twif.org](http://www.tugofwar-twif.org)

[www.ifowstory.org](http://www.ifowstory.org)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**WORLD OUTDOOR CHAMPIONSHIP** in Getxo, Basque Country 16 – 19 September 2021

**WORLD INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIP** in Singapore 24 - 27 February 2022

**WORLD GAMES BIRMINGHAM**, Alabama, USA 7 - 17 July 2022

**WORLD OUTDOOR CHAMPIONSHIP** in Holten, Netherlands 15 – 18 September 2022

**WORLD OUTDOOR CHAMPIONSHIP** in Sursee, Switzerland 31 August – 3 September 2023