International Tug of War Sport Magazine

SEPTEMBER 2010

50 YEARS
ROPEs AND GLOBES

1960  2010
TWIF Executive Committee

Cathal McKeever
President TWIF
Northern Ireland

Cathal started pulling for his club in 1959 and later represented Northern Ireland at both Indoor and Outdoor World Championships. He has been Chairman of the National Association and the UK Commission for 25 and 15 years respectively. Cathal served TWIF many years as Judge, Chief Judge, Referee and Controller at various championships. He was member and later Chairman of the TWIF Technical Commission. In 1990 Cathal was elected Vice-President of TWIF, became Senior Vice President in 1999 and is President since 2007.

Glen Johnson
Secretary General
United States

Glen was an active puller and coach from 1971 to 1981. He coached the first USA team to participate in a TWIF event in 1978 in Dundalk, Ireland. He was Secretary of the USA Association from 1979 to 1985, and President of the USA Association from 1985 to 1987. He became a TWIF Judge in 1980 and is Secretary General of TWIF since 1987. With the exception of two events, Glen attended all TWIF Championships since 1978 and acted as a TWIF Official at all the World Games events since the first in 1981.

Anton Rabe
Treasurer
South Africa

Anton started tug of war in 1969 at the age of 8. Since then, he earned his national colours for South Africa as puller, became national judge whilst still actively pulling and was Secretary, Treasurer and Chairman of various clubs and the Western Province Association from 1981 to 1991. After 1991 he became International Representative for SA and was 6 years Secretary and 6 year President of the SA Federation. He was elected as TWIF Treasurer in 1996 and qualified as TWIF Judge in 1998.

Tony Martin
Senior Vice President
England

Tony started pulling in his late teens, qualified as a Judge and became one of the senior Judges in England. He served as Vice Chairman, Chairman, International Representative and President of England Association. In the early 1970’s he pulled in the European Championship. In 1997 he chaired a TWIF working Group to review the competition system. In 1999 he was elected as TWIF Vice President and later as Senior Vice President. He currently chairs both the TWIF Technical Commission and Doping Commission.

Patrick v d Heuvel
Vice President
Belgium

At the age of 14 Patrick made his first step in tug-of-war. In 1996 he attended his first TWIF Championship in Slagharen, Netherlands with the junior team. His highlight thus far are the two gold medals he won at the World Championships 1998 Rochester, USA; one with the Belgium National Junior team and one with the Family Janssens club in the Club competition. Patrick was President of the Belgium Federation and in 2003 became international representative. In 2007 Patrick was elected TWIF Vice President.
It is a pleasure to be associated with this TWIF magazine which is a special edition published to mark the 50th anniversary of the Tug of War International Federation which was founded in September, 1960.

At this stage I would like to pay tribute to former TWIF President, Co Koren, for the work he has put into compiling such a well researched publication.

Although restricted by content and cost, the reader will gain a very clear picture of the pathway followed by tug-of-war from its origins to its present status as a significant sport recognized at the highest level in the sporting world. The magazine also looks towards the future and touches upon our ultimate ambition of regaining inclusion within the programme of the Olympic Games.

Reading through the magazine I am particularly struck by a sense of admiration not only for the visionaries who founded this Federation but also for those people who worked so hard to bring it to its present standing. Yes, there is a long way to go but I am convinced that we are making steady progress.

It is a great honour to lead such a proud organisation at this time in its history and to work alongside people both on the Executive and at National level who have the interests of our great sport so much at heart.

Cathal McKeever
TWIF President
Ancient
Reading articles on the history of the tug-of-war sport you will most likely find expressions such as; very old, ancient or even archaic. Apparently these terms are used to indicate that tug-of-war has a long and universal history. But the terms ancient and archaic are contradictory to young and dynamic, terms which TWIF uses in their promotional activities.

Spiritual ceremonies
How can this contradiction be explained? Like so many things in life, tug-of-war evolved over time and transformed. Darwin’s bicentenary was celebrated last year, highlighting the evolution of the species. Tug-of-war has gone through a long evolutionary process, spanning over a period of more than 4000 years. Long before tug-of-war became part of structured sport, tug-of-war was a spiritual ceremony within the culture of many tribes all over the globe. Scientists, studying cultural behaviour of ancient tribes and folks, have described ceremonies where tug-of-war contests were performed to represent the struggle between good and evil, as well as the forecast of rain and good harvests.

Wall engraving
Forty centuries ago there were no photographers, however artists at that time were able to capture these ceremonies in wall engravings and frescos dating back as far as 2400 BC. In some countries the old spiritual ceremonies are now performed as traditional tug-of-war, such as the Tsunahiki festivals in Japan.

Physical contest
At the time of the start of the ancient Olympic Games in Olympia (700 BC), tug-of-war contests were not only part of spiritual ceremonies, but also became pure physical strength contests. The physical contests at that time were mostly one-on-one competitions as ropes were normally not available. Though ropes were already being used in ancient Egypt, it was only in the seventeenth century that ropes were commonly available. Ocean going sailing ships needed long and strong ropes, which were produced in rope factories with “long rope-walks”. With these long ropes it became possible to have teams of athletes on the rope instead of only one-on-one events; a team at that time consisted of five pullers. So the maritime industry greatly contributed to the evolution of the tug-of-war sport.

Rules
To use your full strength in a tug-of-war contest, you need to have a good hold for your feet. Some teams at that time got their foothold by digging holes in the ground in which pullers stayed during the pull, while the rope was passed through the hands until the mark went over the centreline. Other teams stepped back until the rope passed the mark. To assure a fair contest, a common set of rules was needed. Competitions between teams from different regions were reason to establish regional/national associations to set these common rules, as for example the Amateur Athletic Association in Great Britain in 1880 and the Amateur Athletic Union in the USA in 1888.

More popular than football
In several countries the tug-of-war competitions were done in a hall. Wooden slats nailed to the floor provided a solid hold for the feet. The Northwestern University in Chicago USA, was a national force in the popular, inter-collegiate sport of tug-of-war. Tug-of-war was more popular than football on campus. Many colleges and universities during this era had traditions of class year tug-of-war competitions, as found in the records of the universities.
Organized sport
Following the organization of sports on national level, the next logical step should have been the formation of international sports federations. However before sports had formed their international federations, Pierre de Coubertin in 1894 founded the International Olympic Committee. Based on the example of the original Olympic Games in Greece, Pierre Coubertin organized a major sports event; the "Olympic Games" every four years (Olympiad).

Olympic period
The tug-of-war sport, as part of the athletic sports (track and field), was on the Olympic program from 1900 to 1920. In Great Britain, the Amateur Athletic Association had established tug-of-war rules, where the rope was not passed through the hands but the team had to walk four meters backwards to bring the marker over the centre line. As the International Association of Athletic Federation (IAAF) did not yet exist, the IOC accepted the British rules for tug-of-war. In this early Olympic period, many countries made up their tug-of-war teams in the Olympic Games from track and field athletes who had already participated in other disciplines, such as shot-put, discus and javelin. Most athletes were only familiar with the indoor version as done in the Universities, which was very static and stationary. It's therefore no coincidence that the best teams at that time were from police or armed forces, used to wearing sturdy boots which gave them good foothold on the field.

TWIF
In the Olympics Games tug-of-war was part of athletics. After the tug-of-war sport was taken off the Olympic program in 1920, many athletic associations neglected the tug-of-war sport. Tug-of-war clubs therefore decided to form their own national tug-of-war association; the Swedish association "Svenska Dragkamp Förbundet" was founded in 1933. Later this example was followed by England (1958) and the Netherlands (1959). Shortly after the formation of the English Association, England and Sweden founded the TWIF in 1960.

Boots
As proven by the police teams in the Olympics, pullers wearing boots were able to slash the heel of the boot into the ground to get a good foothold. These boots however were initially difficult to obtain for teams other than police and armed forces. Later other tug-of-war teams could obtain their footwear (boots) from army surplus trade shops. The original military boots had flat leather soles and heels. They were not expensive and served the tug-of-war sport well. In the eighties most armies changed the footwear to rubber-soled boots with deep profiles. These boots could not be used in the tug-of-war sport. Nowadays outdoor boots for tug-of-war are based on skating boots which are fitted with a full steel-plated heel and a sturdy flat sole of synthetic material.

Dynamic sport
The use of good footwear with steel heels made it possible to improve the technique of the sport, as the teams could walk the rope while keeping good grasp on the soil surface. The technique changed from a static use of the muscles into a dynamic movement with the rope, which requires more athletic skill from the pullers. As a consequence of the more dynamic movement of the team, the eight pullers have to act even more as one total unity to synchronize the unified strength of the team. The Swiss teams were the first to introduce this pulling style which greatly contributed to attractiveness of the tug-of-war sport for spectators. Since tug-of-war became part of the organized sport in the Olympics, tug-of-war has been an outdoor discipline. It was only in the eighties that the indoor tug-of-war discipline was reintroduced to the competition sport. In the present indoor tug-of-war, wooden slats are no longer used; pulling is now done on rubber matting, with special indoor shoes which provide sufficient grip for a dynamic movement on the pulling track.

Dynamic sport
Future evolution
Over a period of four thousand years, tug-of-war evolved from a spiritual ceremony into a dynamic sport. The evolution has not ended; it is an ongoing process, continuously revitalizing the sport. The coming evolution and development will advance at a much faster speed than the past evolution.
Initiative of George Hutton

It all started on a day in September 1960; the late summer had been nice, but autumn would soon spread its usual foggy days in London town. The train rolled to a full stop along the platform of Victoria Station. George Hutton, standing on the platform, watched the people disembarking from the train. He had no problem picking out the tall blond Swede from the crowd stepping down from the carriages. He had never met with Tage Andersson before but exchanged many letters with him during the last months, resulting in this meeting at Victoria Station.

George Hutton, police officer and many years coach of the Kensington Metropolitan Police tug-of-war team had started the correspondence with Tage Andersson as part of his effort to create an interest in the tug-of-war sport on an international scale. The tug-of-war sport in England had been part of the athletic sports and as such had been on the program of the Olympic Games from 1900 to 1920. After the decision of the International Olympic Committee in 1920 to take tug-of-war of the program, no further international tug-of-war competitions had been organized. George Hutton had more than once requested the Amateur Athletic Association (A.A.A.) to arrange for an international tug-of-war competition during the annual A.A.A. competitions with foreign athletic association. The "three A" was not unfriendly, but had informed Mr. Hutton that "the countries we are competing against do not have tug-of-war teams".

Mr. Hutton therefore realized that the tug-of-war sport would have to organize international competitions themselves and to achieve this; they would have to create an International Federation.

Therefore he was one of the initiators in the formation of the English Tug of War Association in 1958. As Chairman of the national association he had spent much of his time on the key objectives of the association; to put the tug-of-war sport "on the map" in England and to create an interest in the sport on an international scale, with the aim of "getting the sport back on the Olympic program". In an attempt to liaise with foreign tug-of-war organizations, he contacted various foreign embassies but did not get much response.

By a lucky coincidence one of his colleagues in the police force informed him of a tug-of-war match between England and Sweden. During an official visit to the Stockholm Police in Sweden, police officers and constables of the City of London Police had been reminded by their Swedish counterparts that the tug-of-war teams representing their countries in the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm had been teams from the Police Forces from London and Stockholm. The Swedish team had won the Olympic Gold Medal in 1912. The City of London Police constables then challenged the Swedes to a tug-of-war match which was accepted by the Swedish Police. The Swedish team won this match, as they did in 1912, but used completely different rules then normally used by the English teams.

Mr. Hutton was very pleased with this information and wrote to the Police in Stockholm informing them of the recent development in England and the wish for international competition. He also enquired whether there was a national association in Sweden. The Stockholm Police informed Mr. Hutton that there was indeed a national association named the Svenska Dragkampforbundet which had been formed in 1933 and gave him the address of the Chairman of the Association, Mr. Tage Andersson. Mr. Hutton then started an extensive correspondence with Mr. Andersson in which they exchanged views on the future development of the tug-of-war sport. In the summer of 1960 Tage Andersson informed George Hutton that there was indeed a national association named the Svenska Dragkampforbundet which had been formed in 1933 and gave him the address of the Chairman of the Association, Mr. Tage Andersson. Mr. Hutton then started an extensive correspondence with Mr. Andersson in which they exchanged views on the future development of the tug-of-war sport. In the summer of 1960 Tage Andersson informed George Hutton that he and his wife would be on a holiday trip through Europe and in the last week-end of September would come to London, where they could meet.

Meeting at a London pub

So on Saturday 24 September 1960, George Hutton welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Andersson at the station in London and invited them to a meal in a pub nearby Victoria Station, where Mr. Bill Hillyard, Secretary General of the English Tug of War Association, joined them. While enjoying their first pint of ale in the pub, it was found that Mrs. Andersson spoke...
fluent English and was kind enough to act as interpreter at the meeting.
This inaugural meeting in London was in fact the genesis of the International Federation for the tug-of-war sport.

**The first international match**
The step taking at the London meeting apparently was a good start for the new international federation, because soon after the meeting in London, an athletic match between England and Sweden was planned by the A.A.A. at White City London in May 1961. Mr. Hutton requested the organizers to include tug-of-war in the program. The Amateur Athletic Association was willing to accept this on condition that the sponsor agreed, which the sponsor was happy to do.

**The meeting in London 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 competitions between the England and Sweden
- to appoint the officers of the International Organization at the next meeting

The first tug-of-war match of England versus Sweden under the supervision of the new international federation took place on 21 May 1961 at the historic and memorable location of White City, where the tug-of-war competition of the 1908 Olympic Games had taken place. Following this match the Swedish team travelled to various places in England and participated in open club competitions. All matches were held under the English rules, which were unfamiliar to the Swedish team.

**TWIF officials meet in Stockholm**
Tage Andersson, as President of the new federation, was very busy in Sweden and organized a return match in the form of a tour to various Swedish clubs in August 1961. Mr. Hutton arranged that the Broadmoor Staff team with coach Jack Fraser travelled to Sweden. It was agreed that all matches should be pulled first under the Swedish rules and then repeated under the English rules, so that both sets of rules could be studied before deciding which rules to choose for International Competitions. As agreed in London, the second meeting of the international federation, which they now agreed to name; the Tug of War International Federation (TWIF) was held in Stockholm during the visit in August. Sweden was represented by Tage Andersson and Dr Rudolf Ullmark while Mr. Hutton together with Jack Fraser represented England. Tage Andersson, who was not very fluent in the English language, had invited Dr Rudolf Ullmark, an experienced international boxing official, to assist him at the meeting. As Secretary General Hillyard was not present, the minutes of this meeting were taken by Dr Rudolf Ullmark. After a very lengthy discussion the English Rules were adopted for International Competitions. The most important difference between the Swedish and English rules was that under the Swedish rules the rope was passed through the hands whereas under the English rules the team had to walk over the ground while keeping grip on the rope. The main reason for selecting the English rules was that the movement of the team walking with the rope was more attractive for spectators than the Swedish rules. Also the two minute time limit for a pull in the Swedish rules was not considered very good for the sport. The meeting then drew up a short Constitution for the Tug-of-War International Federation. Mr. Hutton was appointed Vice-President responsible for all Technical matters. Dr Ullmark was appointed Chairman and it was confirmed that Bill Hillyard should remain Secretary General.

**Celebration of the 1912 Olympics**
In the next year, 1962, the Swedish Association invited a London Police team to take part in the 50th Anniversary celebration of the 1912 Olympic Games in the Stockholm. In the tug-of-war competition of the 1912 Olympic Games, the Stockholm Police team representing Sweden defeated Great Britain, represented by the City of London Police. Unfortunately neither the Police from Stockholm nor from the City of London were in a position to take up this challenge in 1962. As a result of this George Hutton prepared a team from the Kensington Metropolitan Police to represent the London Police and on the Swedish side a team from the Gothenburg Police represented Sweden. This special match to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the 1912 Olympic Games took place in early summer 1962 in the Olympic Stadium in Stockholm. After the match the English team visited several places in Sweden to take part in other competitions.

**The breakthrough**
The following years, both George Hutton and Tage Andersson continued to work for the international tug-of-war and in 1964 Tage Andersson found the break-through they had been hoping for. In 1914 the City of Malmö had organized the Baltic Expo consisting of exhibitions about industry, art and crafts from Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Russia at the time the four countries around the Baltic Sea. The Baltic Games, a multi sport event held in conjunction with the exhibitions, attracted many internationally well-known athletes. In 1964 Malmö wanted to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of these Baltic Games. Tage Andersson arranged that tug-of-war was included in the program and that four countries could be invited to the event which was held in Malmö, Sweden from 26 to 28 August 1964. Mr. Andersson had invited the two founder countries Sweden and England as well as the Netherlands who had formed their national tug-of-war association in 1959. As the forth country he selected Denmark, which was the neighbouring country very close to Malmö. In a
points-competition, arranged at an excellent venue in the Pildamsparken, the teams met in a true international competition staged at 720 kilos. The winners were England, Netherlands second, Sweden third and Denmark fourth. The young tug-of-war federation (TWIF) had made its first steps in the right direction to future development.

**TWIF Executive committee 1964**

On the occasion of the Baltic Games, TWIF held their third meeting in Malmö. TWIF Chairman, Dr Rudolf Ullmark, introduced his friend Fugi Fuchs to the Baltic Games. They had met in the international boxing federation (A.I.B.A.) where Dr Ullmark was the President of the Medical Commission for amateur boxing and Fugi Fuchs had accompanied his father who was a boxing promoter in Switzerland. Fugi Fuchs acted as the interpreter at the TWIF meeting. Mr. Fuchs, who had never before seen tug-of-war, enjoyed it very much and agreed to work for the development of the tug-of-war sport in Switzerland. He was appointed Press Liaison Officer and a Vice-President of TWIF.

**Crystal Palace, London**

The TWIF Vice President Mr. Hutton makes good progress in England where he planned to stage the first European Championships in London in 1965. The Central Council for Physical Recreation in England had arranged for a month of sport to be held at various venues. With their co-operation Mr. Hutton was able to stage the European Championships at Crystal Palace, London on 21 August 1965. TWIF invited eight countries to compete. Three countries, Denmark, Italy and Republic of Ireland declined, stating that they were not sufficiently developed in the tug-of-war sport to take part in a European Championships. Five countries competed in the Championships, staged at 720 Kilos; Sweden, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Switzerland and England. In connection with the European Championships Mr. Hutton arranged an Open Club Competition to be held on the morning of the 21st August where 40 Clubs attended. This ensured that the stands were full to cheer on the efforts of the national teams during the European Championships.

Slowly but surely the TWIF had progressed and had showed its ability to organize international championships. With the affiliation of Switzerland and Northern Ireland the membership of the federation had risen to...
In 1966 TWIF suffered a setback due to the private circumstances of a number of officials; Tage Andersson, who had done so much for international tug-of-war had serious back trouble, which required major surgery and Dr Rudolf Ullmark was seriously ill with Parkinson’s disease. Mr. George Hutton temporarily stepped down from his international work due to the loss of his wife. Mr. George Hutton recommenced working for the international tug-of-war sport again in 1967. He contacted the countries that had competed at Crystal Palace in 1965 and was pleased to hear from the Netherlands, represented by Willy Wolbert, that the Netherlands Tug of War Association might be able to stage a European Championships in 1968. Arrangements were made for a meeting in Ostend in April 1967, as Ostend was very central for all member countries of the young federation. At this meeting, the Netherlands was granted to host the European Championships 1968 in Borculo. During the meeting in Ostend in 1967, Fugi Fuchs was elected President of TWIF, George Hutton Chairman and Bill Hillyard remained Secretary General.

1968 start of regular championships

In 1968 two more countries (Republic of Ireland and Wales) joined TWIF, bringing the membership to seven countries. The European Championships in Borculo, Netherlands proved extremely successful, seven countries taking part and competing for the first time in two different weight classes, i.e. 720 and 640 Kilos. England was the winner in both weight classes.

Ireland is, after England and the Netherlands, the third country to host a European Championships. The young national tug-of-war association of the Republic of Ireland felt strong enough to take up the challenge and organize the European Championships 1969 in Fermoy, County Cork in the south of Ireland. England won the title again in the 720 Kilos; however in the 640 Kilos class the Welsh team took the title with England in second place. The host country Ireland was certainly happy with their second place in the 720 kilo class.

Following the championships in Fermoy, the international tug-of-war crowd joined again at Crystal Palace, London for the European Championships 1970. All seven TWIF members participated in the 640 kilo class, which this time was won by Northern Ireland with England again in second place. In the 720 kilo class, England is still unbeaten and the Netherlands had to be satisfied with the second place. Sweden, the other pioneer in the international tug-of-war sport, seized the third place in both weight classes.

The dream came true

In the first ten years the Tug of War International Federation (TWIF) had successful walked its first wobbling steps on the long road to maturity. George Hutton’s desire to create an international interest in the tug-of-war sport was well in progress; however the second part of “his dream”, the return of tug-of-war on the Olympic program was (and is) still far beyond the horizon.

In their meeting on the Saturday afternoon at Victoria Station in September 1960, the pioneers George Hutton and Tage Andersson have laid the base of the Tug of War International Federation on which the federation has built its later progress to a full-grown federation, which in 2010 celebrates its 50th Anniversary.
Competition structure

The best of three

The first international tug-of-war competitions organized by TWIF were test matches between England and Sweden. A tug-of-war contest is called a "pull". The tug-of-war match is based on "the best of three pulls"; meaning that after both teams have won one pull, a third and deciding pull is required to assign a winner. The winner after two pulls gets three points, the loser nil; the winner after three pulls gets two points and the loser one point.

Point’s competition and finals

When in 1964 at the Baltic Games four member countries participated, TWIF used the point competition or "round robin" (every team competes every team) as the fairest competition system for group competitions. A point competition with numerous teams in one group is not feasible due to the long time required. So depending on the number of teams, the participating teams are distributed over 2, 4 or 8 groups followed by a knock-out phase leading to semi-finals and finals.

Until 1992 the single point’s competition was still used in competitions with less than twelve teams. Such a point competition does not have a final which is always the climax in sport events. TWIF accepted that this system was not attractive for the media and spectators and introduced the point competition to determine the top four teams, who then entered the semi finals.

Modifications

In the eighties when the TWIF membership had grown to 30 countries and additional weight classes came onto the program, the point’s competition in the groups took too long and measures were required to reduce the time of the group competitions. The first action was to delete the third and deciding pull; in case of a draw, both teams score one point. However at the end of the points competition teams could still have equal points, which require pull-off matches. The next time-saving measure was the "tie-breaking" procedure. In this procedure, the results between teams, numbers of victories, cautions and the weight of the teams are used to decide on the final ranking.

Automation

Competition forms

The draw for the composition of the groups for a competition can only be done after the teams have been weighted on the scales. The weighing took place in the morning followed by the time-consuming procedure of manually making draws and typing the draw-sheets, causing big delays for the start of the competition. So in 1990 TWIF introduced the first computer program for the production of the draw-sheet (order of pulling). The program based the group’s composition on an equal spread of the nationalities over the groups and made a random draw for the pulling order. The computer program printed the required draw-sheets for the competition within minutes after the weighing was finished. The results were marked by the recorders on the draw-sheet and later entered into the computer to produce the result book. The initial program had to be distributed together with the operating software and could only be installed on one computer. The program was later (1997) re-
fined and written in Visual Basic of the Microsoft Access program, part of the widely used Microsoft Office suite, which made the program available to all TWIF members.

**Results and score display**
For the Indoor Championships 2000 in The Netherlands the program was extended with a module to display the life scores on a screen via a beamer, which from that time on is used at all indoor events. When the organizers of the World Games 2005 supplied a video wall to display the score in daylight at the outdoor competition, the program was adapted for use with a video wall.

**Accreditation and registration**
To assist the organizers of the TWIF events, the program in 2006 was further extended to include the accreditation system for participants as well as the registration of clubs. The accreditation program is integrated with the score program to print name lists of the winning teams in result books. When more computers were used, the next step was to upgrade the program for network operation.

**Web application**
The program, introduced in 1991, needed almost annual updating due to the changes in competition structure etc. Mr. Koren, who had designed and maintained the program, retired in 2007. After his retirement TWIF had to outsource the system and contracted Boerdam Media to convert the system to a web application that can be used worldwide by organizers of TWIF events. The most recent adaptation of the program is the inclusion of an automatic interface with the results system of Swiss Timing used at the World Games. The application performed satisfactorily during the World Games 2009 in Kaohsiung.

**Executive Committee**
With the growth of TWIF, the composition of the Executive Committee enlarged as well. Started in 1960 with a President, a Chairman and a Secretary General, the composition expanded in 1972 to four persons, when President Fuchs felt that TWIF might rise funding from television rights and would require a Treasurer. Mr. Eric Shorthouse from the Netherlands was the first official elected in that position. TWIF did not raise much money from television, but having a Treasurer was certainly needed for the federation. It was only in 1980 that the Executive Committee further expanded to five officials, by co-opting Mr. Co Koren as Vice President. The size of the committee has since not changed but the office of Chairman in 1983 changed into Senior Vice President.

**Commissions**

**Technical Commission.**
At the European Championships in 1979 in Dundalk, Ireland, the application of the rules by the judges was criticized. TWIF Congress agreed to establish the Technical Committee to provide uniform interpretation of the rules for tug of war. The report of the Technical Committee, who had their first meeting in The Netherlands, was accepted by TWIF and Judges were instructed on the correct interpretation of the Rules. This action was also the start of the Judges Panel, the group of qualified judges that have successfully completed a Judges Training Course. With the sponsorship of Bushmills, the Technical Committee in 1980 staged the first course at the University of Ulster in Coleraine, Northern Ireland. The Technical Committee is involved in keeping the rules updated and ensures that every two years a new Rules Manual is published and distributed to all members.

**PR Commission**
Starting with the publication of the TWIF Newsletter in 1988, a Public Relation Committee was established with the main task to edit the regular publication of the newsletter, which later was enhanced to the TWIF Magazine.

**Medical Commission**
Initially TWIF established the Medical Commission to deal with medical issues such as the minimum age for the junior category as well as anti-doping issues. Along with the enhanced fight against doping by the institution of WADA and the ensuing overwhelming amount of rules and procedures, TWIF instituted the Anti-Doping Commission with a special Anti-Doping administrator dealing with all paperwork and procedures.

**Athletes Commission**
Until 2008 TWIF saw no specific need to institute an Athletes Commission as over the years active pullers or recently retired pullers had been on the Executive Committee and the Technical Committee. Only recently, on instigation of the IOC, TWIF established an Athletes Commission in which both male and female athletes are represented.

**George Hutton’s greatest dream**
The return of tug-of-war onto the Olympic sport was George Hutton’s greatest dream. In the early seventies TWIF President Fuchs, through his informal contacts in GAISF with IOC officials, tried to ease and smooth the return of tug-of-war into the Olympics but was informed that TWIF required more member countries. In 1980 Mr. Koren, at that time TWIF Vice President, started a formal correspondence with the IOC. On the query of Mr. Koren in 1981, IOC Director Monique Berlioux informed TWIF that the tug-of-war sport was deleted from the program “to bring about a reduction in the number of sports on the Olympic program”. It was important for TWIF to know that tug-of-war was not excluded due to a negative judgment on the sport. The IOC had constituted the status of “Olympic recognized sports” in the Olympic Charter. Mr. Koren communicated regularly with the IOC to achieve the formal requirements for application for such recognition. These requirements changed from time to time, mainly increasing the number of the required affiliated members.

**Failed application**
In 1985 Mr. Koren submitted a formal application for recognition. In communication with Mr. Robert Schneider, the then IOC Sports Director, Mr. Koren heard that the TWIF application fulfilled all required conditions and was placed on the agenda of the IOC Executive Board. It was therefore a great disappointment for TWIF when this application was not accepted. Informally it was disclosed to TWIF that the application had failed due to the membership of South Africa, which at that time was banned from the Olympics due to the apartheid. After the shock TWIF discussed the issue internally and tried to find a harmonious solution with the South African Tug of War Association to avoid further political conflicts. The South African Association maintained its membership in TWIF, but voluntarily agreed to refrain from participation in TWIF Championships. In the subsequent years TWIF kept contact with the IOC to stay up to date with the requirements for recognition. When the IOC in 1992 lifted the ban from South Africa, TWIF reopened the formal communication regarding the application for recognition. The conditions and requirements for recognition had become far more stringent since the application in 1985. The new conditions required more detailed information from members which was not readily available from member associations; the application in 1992 therefore had to be withdrawn to avoid a second failure. After quite some effort Mr. Koren was able in 1998 to arrange a meeting with the then IOC Vice President Rogge, explaining to him the history of the various attempts for recognition. Mr. Rogge advised Mr. Koren to make a new application, which was done in the same year.

**IOC recognition**
In coordination with the IOC Sports Director Mr. Gilbert Felli, the application was com-
pleted with the required information as well as the first promotional video tape on the tug-of-war-of-war sport. In the beginning of 1999 Mr. Felli informed TWIF that the application was put on the agenda of the coming IOC Board meeting and on 15 June 1999 the IOC granted TWIF provisional recognition during their session in Seoul, Korea. Such provisional recognition needs to be confirmed after two years. So finally on 24 February 2002, TWIF was informed of the full Olympic recognition by the IOC Session in Salt Lake City, USA.

IOC requirements change time and again. Only a few years after the full recognition, TWIF was informed that the minimum number of affiliated members had been increased to fifty. In 2006 TWIF made an ultimate effort to acquire new members and at the Annual General Meeting in 2007 in Sweden, the TWIF membership reached the required number. The same year the IOC issued a formal questionnaire to check the status of all recognized IF’s. TWIF completed the massive document in time and after a meeting with the IOC Sport department in Athens in 2008, was informed that the Olympic recognition remained valid.

Advancement and progress
Being a sport with its roots deep in history, it is almost logical that tug-of-war tends to preserve its traditions. In the fifty years existence however TWIF has develop and progressed, perhaps not fast but kept pace with changes in society and sport. For example the first demonstration of women’s tug-of-war was in 1980, but it took until 1984 before the women discipline was included in the Club Competitions and came on to the program of the TWIF Championships in 1986. A structured planning of the development was initiated at the Silver Jubilee in 1985 and materialized in a Policy Plan that covers a four-year period and its progress is monitored annually. Advancement of projects is not slowed by lack of inspiration but by insufficient finances. Plans for break-through projects were on the Policy Plan at an early stage but did not materialize due to the lack of funding. Since 1992 the Policy Plans also contain budget plans to ensure that the required funding is available and only realistic projects are included.

New media
In 1988 the first TWIF Newsletter was published and later enhanced to the TWIF Magazine. Currently the distribution of the magazine is mainly through the internet. TWIF was one of the first International Federations that saw the opportunities of the new media. The contract with WorldSport.Com in 1998 gave TWIF a temporary financial boost which was very helpful in realizing a number of projects. The bankruptcy and collapse of WorldSport.Com was a bitter disappointment, but did not stop the steady development of the sport. The use of computers in the competition administration and scoring started already in 1991 and progressed to a web application available for worldwide use.

As tug-of-war is a strenuous sport, the introduction of a lower age limit for the Junior category was taken with great care. In 2002 TWIF, in cooperation with the University of Pretoria, a Medical Study on the tug-of-war sport was initiated. Results of this study were very valuable in the further development of the sport; reports of the study are published on the website.

Promotion of the sport to new potential participants at schools required good information but also digestible presentation of the information. The first promotional videos were made in 1997 on video tapes and recently all new instructions and promotion material have been produced on DVD’s.

Media exposure
The tug-of-war sport certainly wishes to be a popular sport with a good exposure in the media (television) and press. The realization that a better image and more exposure require more consideration for the spectators and the media is a slow process. Over the years TWIF has made some changes with the sole purpose to satisfy the spectators and media interest. The first manually operated scoreboard was introduced at the Indoor Championships 2000 in Slaghaeren, The Netherlands. The electronic score board for outdoor events, as initiated at the World Games 2005, is now used in all Championships. The late introduction of the electronic score board was not an ignorance of media interest but purely a financial issue. At the World Games 2001 in Akita, Japan TWIF for the first time presented the judges in their full TWIF uniform, wearing either a blue polo-shirt or a sweatshirt depending on weather conditions. It had been a long struggle to convince many judges that the traditional blazer was not suitable in the competition arena where judges have to use arm signals to indicate the infringements and cautions to the teams and recorders.

Promotion of the sport to new potential participants at schools required good information but also digestible presentation of the information. The first promotional videos were made in 1997 on video tapes and recently all new instructions and promotion material have been produced on DVD’s.
Steady management

Only four Presidents in 50 years

The term of office for the TWIF Executive Committee is four years, so every four years a totally new committee should be elected. In the fifty years, there could have been sixty officials. TWIF, like any other International Federation, surely had its disputes and dilemmas, but even in difficult times the continuum in the Executive Committee has been very firm. In the fifty years there have only been four Presidents, Secretaries General and Treasurers.

Pioneer managed TWIF

George Hutton, the initiator and pioneer of TWIF, never opted for the position of President. He always placed other persons in the forefront, but worked very hard 30 years to achieve his ideals in the position of Chairman, Vice President and Senior Vice President of the TWIF. In the early years the work of the TWIF Executive Committee members was largely done by correspondence as there were very few meetings and even less members. Mr. Tage Andersson, the first President of TWIF and fellow pioneer of George Hutton, managed the federation until it organized its first European Championships in 1965. In 1967 Mr. Andersson was succeeded by Fugi Fuchs, an hotelier from Switzerland who had done his traineeship in London and was fluent in English. Mr. Fuchs was introduced to the tug-of-war of war sport by the TWIF Chairman, Dr. Ullmark; they knew each other through boxing.

Representing TWIF

Mr. Fuchs represented TWIF in GAISF; while TWIF’s internal management remained with George Hutton. In GAISF Mr. Fuchs built valuable connections for TWIF and steered TWIF into the World Games, where he was elected as Vice President. Mr. Fuchs was TWIF President until his death in 1983; he had been in office 15 years. He was succeeded by Mr. Co Koren, who was elected in the Annual General Meeting of 1983 after he had been TWIF Vice President since 1980. Mr. Koren managed TWIF and represented TWIF in the international organizations GAISF, IWGA and ARISF. President Koren led TWIF until 2007 when he retired and was succeeded by Mr. Cathal McKeever, who had been Senior Vice Present until that time. Mr. Koren was Secretary General of the IWGA until his retirement in 2010 and served one term of office as member of the GAISF Council.

Serving more terms

The current ExCo was elected at the AGM in Stenungsund, Sweden 2007. In the fifty years, TWIF had a total of 18 persons in office, coming from eleven countries in Europe, North America and South Africa, most of them serving for three or more terms of office. Not bad for continuity.

TWIF Presidents, Secretaries General and Treasurers

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President Koren and Tage Andersson

AGM uppsala 1994

Tony Martin, Cathal McKeever and Co Koren

Asian Championships 2006
"When will the tug-of-war sport be on the Olympic Program again? " No official or puller will deny that they hope and dream that one-day tug-of-war would return to the Olympic Program. They are however realistic enough to admit that it is not simple to get onto the overloaded Olympic Program, even as a discontinued Olympic sport of the early years of the modern Games. Still all officials and pullers are proud of the Olympic history of the tug-of-war from 1900 to 1920.

Paris 1900

The Paris Olympics of 1900 were the first Games where the tug-of-war sport featured on the program. A tug-of-war contest at that time was basically the same format as the present contest, though the tug-of-war teams in these early days consisted of six persons instead of the present eight. There are several versions of the result of the tug-of-war competition in the Paris Games. Some records indicate that the medals were won by the USA, Sweden/Denmark and France, whilst in other accounts of the Games, the Swedes are acknowledged as the Champions, with France winning the silver. Apparently there is a difference of opinion whether the matches in which the USA participated were official events of the Olympics or only exhibition pulls, which took place after the official event was finished. Such conflict now seems very absurd in sports organization, at those early Olympic events however, such incident were certainly not unusual.

St. Louis 1904

The IOC had planned to stage the 1904 Olympics in Chicago, USA; however the American organizers wanted the Games to be part of the large world fare, the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition. As a result the Olympics had to move to St. Louis. The event suffered from this secondary role and only 680 participants from 13 countries competed in the event, which again was spread over a long period of five months. The event was totally dominated by national competitors, as only 100 participants from outside the USA had come to the St. Louis Games. It is therefore no surprise that the medals in the tug-of-war competition were all won by teams from the USA. It is not certain whether the American organizers were very up to date to the rules for tug-of-war competitions; however the three USA teams in the St. Louis Games consisted only of five persons per team. The gold medal was won by the Milwaukee Athletic Club, the silver by the West Saint Louis Turnverein A and their colleagues from the B team of the same club took the bronze medal.

Athens 1906

Olympic Games are staged at the beginning of each Olympiad, which is the four years period between the Olympic Games. The Athens Games of 1906 are therefore not considered “official” Olympic Games. The Games in Athens, however restored the fate and hope in the modern Olympic Games. Twenty nations competed with national sanctioned delegations bringing a total number of 884 competitors to Athens and the Panathenean Stadium. The “inserted” or “intercalated” Games, as they are named in many publications, were well respected by both spectators and participants and helped the modern Olympic to survive in its endeavour to develop the Olympic Games into an internationally respected sport event. Tug-of-war sport featured in Athens for the third time on the Olympic program. This time the participating tug-of-war teams competed in the regular eight persons per team configuration. Germany and the host country Greece participated for the first time in the Olympic tug-of-war event. Being new in the international tug-of-war sport did not stop them competing for the top. The German team won the gold, leaving the silver for Greece. Sweden, after winning the gold medal in the Paris Games in 1900, participated for the second time in the Olympic Games. Despite their experience, the athletes of the Swedish team had to be content with the bronze medal.

London 1908

Originally the Games of 1908 were pro-
grammed to be staged in Rome, Italy. The eruption of the volcano Vesuvius in 1906, however, made the IOC decide to move the Games to London. In previous Games the organization was essentially done by bodies from outside the sport, such as exhibition and fair organizers; in the London Games the sport institutions had a substantial role in the management of the Games.

The tug-of-war event in London was totally dominated by the Great Britain teams. The teams were recruited from police divisions. The American and Swedish teams were completely bewildered seeing the performance of the British teams. The USA team consisted of a group of excellent athletes, with John J. Flanagan, Marty Sheridan and Marquis Horr, who all had won medals in discus and hammer throwing disciplines. The USA team of fine athletes were entirely defeated by the skill and technique of the British policemen and found that strength alone is not enough to win a tug-of-war match. In the final match in London Games 1908, the London City Police, in their contest against the Liverpool Police, won in two straight pulls. The bronze medal in tug-of-war was a walkover for the K Division of the London Metropolitan Police team, as the Swedes were so dazed by the pure force and skill of the British teams that they did not dare to go to the rope.

**Stockholm 1912**

The 1912 Games brought delegations from 28 nations with a total number of 2500 participants to Stockholm. In response to the request of the Secretary of the Swedish Olympic Committee to ensure a strong representing team, special trials in tug-of-war competitions were held. It was the Stockholm Police team that came out as the strongest and they represented Sweden. Five countries had announced their participation; Austria, Bohemia, Great Britain, Luxembourg, and Sweden. The Swedes were very well aware that their strongest opponents would be the winners of the gold medal in 1908 Games, the London City Police team. The program was set for five consecutive days starting on Sunday 7 July. The match between Sweden and Great Britain was planned for the second day of the program. When the teams from Austria, Bohemia and Luxembourg faced the skill and strength of the Swedish and the British teams, they did not wish to be defeated and did not turn up at the competition. So the focus was totally on the match between Sweden and Great Britain, both teams consisting of well trained police men. The match took place on Monday 8 July in the afternoon. The stand in the stadium was packed with thousands of spectators who breathlessly awaited the result of the big match. After the start in the first pull, the rope was absolutely tight and did not move for 30 seconds, then, with the characteristically powerful Swedish heaves, the Swedish team pulled their British opponents forward. The first pull was a clear victory for the Swedish team. The thunder of applause from the Swedish spectators helped the Swedish teams restore their strength to be ready for the second pull which started after the regular 5 minutes rest period. In the second pull, the British started very strong, taking the Swedish very near the mark, but then the Swedes stopped the British team. Neither team could make much more ground, however the Swedish team proved to be more fit, as some of the British pullers became exhausted and sat down on the ground. So the Swedes also won the second pull after the judge disqualified the British team for sitting.

**Antwerp 1920**

The Games in Antwerp were the first Games where the Olympic flag with the five rings was flown during the Games. The opposition for the British tug-of-war team in Antwerp was definitely less than in the previous Games in Stockholm as the Swedish tug-of-war team did not participate. The new opponents came from Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands. The London Bobbies defeated Belgium, Netherlands and Italy in straight pulls and won their second gold medal in the Olympics. The Netherlands won their first match from Belgium, but were unable to take a point from the British, they also defeated Italy although that was a fierce match, but they won both ends. The last match between Belgium and Netherlands for the silver medal was a real contest. The first pull was won by the Netherlands. In the second pull the Belgian team fought back very well and the pull took twice as much time as the first pull, but the Netherlands team also won the second pull. Whilst the British teams were used to winning Olympic medals, the silver medal for the Netherlands team was the first and only Olympic silver medal. The Belgium team was very content with their Olympic bronze medal.

**End of tug-of-war in the Olympics**

The Antwerp Games were the last Olympics for the tug-of-war sport, as the IOC in their Session in August 1920 took the decision to remove tug-of-war from the program "in order to bring about a reduction in the number of sports on the Olympic program".

1920 Olympics Antwerp, Belgium
The first World Championships

Five years after its inception, TWIF managed to stage the first European Championships. In 1965 the TWIF Chairman Mr. Hutton, at that time also Chairman of the English Association, obtained the assistance of Central Council of Physical Recreation in England to host the European Championships in Crystal Palace, London. TWIF organized European Championships every year until World Championships were implemented. The ultimate goal of the federation was to organize World Championships. It was ten years later in 1975 that TWIF, on request from the Netherlands Tug-of-War Association NTB, agreed to stage the first World Championships in the Netherlands. In 1968 the Netherlands had hosted the first European Championships outside England in Borculo, a little village in the eastern part of the Netherlands. For the World Championships 1975 the NTB had chosen Doetinchem, a small city in a region where tug-of-war was very popular. Doetinchem is certainly not a metropolis like London and the local green near the river IJssel is no comparison to the Crystal Palace stadium. The enthusiasm of the organizers, headed by Mr. Frits Pouw, Mayor of the nearby village Wehl, and the support of national television however were great contributions, making the first World Championships a winner.

Regular World Championships

Apparently the World Championships appealed to the members, as the next year 1976, TWIF staged the second World Championships in Cape Town, South Africa. This was the first World Championships outside Europe. Since then European Championships and World Championships are alternately staged every two years, with the exception of 1985, when TWIF celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary and that event had to be a World Championship, resulting in three consecutive World Championships in 1984, 1985 and 1986.

Spread over four continents

Continental Championships have been organized by TWIF in Europe. Countries in the Asian region also held championships mostly in the indoor discipline. With the increasing membership in this region, it is expected that future Asian Championships will be staged under TWIF auspices. Overall the TWIF staged 37 World Championships, 24 Outdoor World Championships and 13 Indoor World Championships, including the 5 Oceanic Championships. From the first World Championships in Doetinchem, Netherlands to the coming World Championships in Pretoria, South Africa, TWIF events (including continental championships) travelled the whole globe, with the exception of the South American continent where TWIF until now does not have member countries.

And the winner is……

The winner of the first World Championship medals was England in both the 640 and 720 weight classes. These medals were only the first in a long row of championship titles won by England, who is by far the leader in the World Championships medal ranking. Netherlands and Switzerland are close on places 2 and 3 but at a respectable distance after England, who especially in the early stages of TWIF won almost each and every competition. In recent years more and more countries are able to win a World Championship medal, which expanding the ranking list of World Championships titles to 15 countries.

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The job of a coach
You know, tug-of-war is such a unique sport. There is no other sport like it. If you really have to name a sport that’s coming close; it’s rowing.

Similarities
The use of the musculature and the dynamics of rowing have certain similarities with the tug-of-war sport. Though rowing has many disciplines, there is one discipline that comes close to tug-of-war; the coxed eight. That is the discipline with eight rowers plus a coxswain. In the “coxed” disciplines, the coxswain is at the helm and steers the boat. The coxswain is an integral part of the team; he or she also goes with the team on the podium and gets a medal.

In the tug-of-war sport, a coach is also an essential and integral part of the team and certainly gets a medal when the team wins the competition. Tug-of-war and rowing are definitely different sports, the job of a tug-of-war coach and a coxswain is very unlike. A tug-of-war coach has no helm to steer the team, whilst the coxswain has no opponent team attached to his boat.

Multi-tasking
The tug-of-war coach acts as the eyes of the team; all the time watching the rival with hawk eyes. The coach observes the opponent and is the early warning system for the team, similar to AWACS aircraft in an air battle. He sees or even senses when the other team is going to attack or when the other team is slipping or getting tired. So he only has to give the sign when to attack and the team will win…..

Well it is not all that simple...
First of all the other team also has a coach who is watching the opponent; so the coaches are watching each other. Yes, like hawks. It can be a matter of reacting within a split-second to block an attack of the opponent or quickly start an attack so the other team cannot stop it. But the coach has more roles to play in the game; he is the motivator of his team, seeing when to encourage a puller; he is also the conductor, keeping the beat and rhythm of the movement of the team.

But in the end it’s the technique, the power and the endurance of the total team that decides who is winning or losing the match and the coach is only part of the team.
Sweden
The Svenska Dragkampforbundet was established in 1933. The Sweden has a good national organization and together with England they founded TWIF in 1960. They were able to arrange the first real international competition as part of a multi sport event in the Baltic Games 1964, Malmo. The organizers invited two new countries; the Netherlands and Denmark to participate. After the Games the Netherlands joined TWIF, while Denmark did not feel developed enough to join. Currently Sweden has made new contacts with Denmark to help them to join TWIF. Mr. Tage Andersson was the first TWIF President and Mr. Rudolf Ullmark the first TWIF Chairman. For health reasons the two Swedish officials had to step down in 1966 from the TWIF Executive Committee. Sweden participated in 213 TWIF competitions and won 17 World titles as well as 19 European titles. Including the Baltic Games, Sweden has been the host country for 6 TWIF Championships.

England
The Tug-of-War Association in England established in 1959 was much younger then the Swedish association, but the clubs had a long experience in national competitions organized by the Amateur Athletic Association. After the Baltic Games 1964, England was able to organize the first European Championships in 1965 at Crystal Palace, London. In total England hosted 9 TWIF Championships and participated in 244 TWIF competitions. They won two World Games titles for Great Britain, 37 World titles and 24 European titles. George Hutton, the initiator of TWIF, was active in the TWIF Executive Committee until 1990 after serving TWIF for 30 years. Currently Mr. Tony Martin is TWIF Senior Vice President, a position that has also been fulfilled by Peter Baker. Two TWIF Secretaries General were from England, the first TWIF Secretary General Mr Bill Hillyard and later Mr. Peter Edlin who also served TWIF in the position of Vice President.

Netherlands
The Netherlands started its national association (NTB) in 1958 and existed for six years when they participated in the Baltic Games in 1964. The NTB was very motivated for the international tug-of-war sport and staged the second European Champion in 1968 in Borculo. Since then the NTB has hosted more than ten (10) TWIF Championships in the Netherlands. Five of these Championships have been organized in the “Bonte Wever”, Slagharen, the Eldorado for the international tug-of-war sport which unfortunately was destroyed by fire in May 2001. The first TWIF World Championships was staged in 1975 in Doetinchem and the last three TWIF Championships were in Assen near the “Smelt”. This facility has no hotel accommodation which made the Bonte Wever such an excellent venue, the construction of a hotel near the Smelt might perhaps make this facility into a new Bonte Wever. The Netherlands participated in 252 TWIF competitions and has won 8 World Games titles, 26 World titles and 17 European titles. Mr. Co Koren became TWIF Vice President in 1980 and was elected President after the death of Fugi Fuchs in 1983; he remained in that office until his retirement in May 2007.

Switzerland
After Mr. Fugi Fuchs was introduced to the tug-of-war sport by his friend Rudolf Ullmark during the Baltic Games 1964, he established a Swiss tug-of-war team, consisting of ski instructors, who participated in the European Championships 1965. At the next TWIF meeting in 1967 in Ostend, Belgium Mr. Fuchs was elected TWIF President as successor of Tage Andersson who had to step down due to health reasons. Mr. Fuchs remained in office until his death in 1983, serving TWIF as President for 16 years. Switzerland participated in 219 TWIF competitions and won their first title at the European Championships in 1981 after they had participated for 16 years in TWIF competitions. But since that year they have won 6 World Games titles, 33 World titles and 23 European titles. Switzerland hosted 3 European Championships and 2 World Championships.

Northern Ireland
The Tug-of-war Association of Northern Ireland joined TWIF in 1965, when they participated in the European Championship at Crystal Palace and directly won the silver medal in the 720KG class. Since then they took part in 127 TWIF competitions and won three World titles (all in Indoor events) and one European title. In 1976 Mr. John Shepherd became TWIF Treasurer as successor of Mr. Eric Shorthouse. In 1990 Mr. Cathal McKeever was elected TWIF Vice President and later Senior Vice President. After the retirement of Mr. Co Koren in 2007 he was elected TWIF President.

Ireland
Through contacts with John Shepherd, who was Judge in the English Association and...
later TWIF Treasurer, Ireland became interested in the tug-of-war sport and founded The Irish Tug of War Association (ITOWA) in 1967. Mr. Tommy Elmore, who later became TWIF Treasurer, joined ITOWA in early 1968 and attended the European Championship with the Irish teams in 1968 Borculo, Netherlands. Ireland did not win a medal at their first international competition, but organized the next European Championships in 1969 in Fermoy. Ireland has been the host of seven TWIF events; the most recent being the Indoor World Championships 2006 in Kilarney. Irish teams participated in 227 TWIF competitions and won 2 World Games titles, 14 World titles and 8 European titles. Boley has been (and still is) one of the most successful clubs of Ireland, winning many medals in Open Club Competition but is also the main contributor of pullers for the national teams.

**Wales**

Wales joined TWIF in the same year as Ireland and their first TWIF competition was also the European Championships 1968 in the Netherlands. Mr. Eric Shorthouse became the first Treasurer of TWIF in 1972 and after the death of Bill Hillyard in 1976, the second TWIF Secretary General. Wales has a relative small national association and participated in 99 TWIF competitions. In the World Games they won a bronze medal for Great Britain and twice the European Championships in 640KG. Wales has been the host country for a European Champion Outdoor and a World Championships Indoor.

**South Africa**

South Africa was the first non-European country joining TWIF in 1971. The tug-of-war was long established in South Africa and teams participated in TWIF events event even before TWIF was able to organize the first World Championships in 1975. Sport organizations in South Africa had a difficult episode at that time as the IOC had expelled South Africa in 1970 from membership. South African teams participated in 123 TWIF competitions and won one World title in the Junior category in 2008. In the Oceanic Championships, the TWIF continental championship for countries outside Europe, they won 13 titles. South Africa hosted four TWIF events, three World Championships and one Oceanic Championships. They are also the host country for the Jubilee Championships in 2010.

**Channel Islands**

Jersey joined TWIF in 1973 and Guernsey several years later. They are members in TWIF together with the other countries of the British Isles. As a small organization they still participated in 57 TWIF competitions and were host twice of a European Championships in St. Heliers. Twice they won a bronze medal, one in a World and one in a European Championship. In 1979 Mr. Carl Hinault was temporary a Vice President of TWIF.

**France**

Tug-of-war is a traditional sport in northern Spain and in the south of France. Through the World Championships 1975 in the Netherlands the two countries became aware of the existence of TWIF and joined the international federation in 1976. Spain has participated in 124 international competitions while the participation of the French teams with 31 international competitions is far less. The tug-of-war sport in France is much smaller than in Spain. The best result of France in the tug-of-war sport dates back to 1900 when they won a silver medal in the Olympic Games in Paris. Spain on the other hand won 2 World Games titles; one in outdoor and one in the indoor discipline, 13 World titles and 7 European titles.

**Australia**

The tug-of-war sport was not unknown in "down-under"; however they only joined TWIF in 1977 and since then participated in 39 international competitions. As most international events are staged in Europe, the participation for Aussies in TWIF events is always a long-long distance issue. Australia won 2 Oceanic titles in the women category and in the same category they participated in the Indoor discipline in World Games 2001 in Japan, which for them was a "nearby" event. Australia has been a host once of a TWIF event; the Oceanic Championships 1995 in Adelaide.

**United States**

In the past tug-of-war sport had been a very popular sport at American Universities, but after tug-of-war was no longer part of track and field, sport almost faded away. It was revived in the mid-west around Chicago, where it had been very popular on the NWU university. The US Association joined TWIF in 1979 under the guidance of Bob Pulfer and Glen Johnson. In 1980 they participated for the first time in a TWIF World Championship and took part in almost every World Championship since that year, adding to a total of 110 international competitions. The women’s teams participated twice in the indoor discipline in World Games, both times winning the bronze medal. In 2004 the women’s team won the World title in the outdoor discipline. Beyond the tug-of-war event in the Olympic Games in 1904 and the World Games in 2001, the USTOWA hosted 3 World Championships, one in Oshkosh and two in 1980.
Rochester. Mr Johnson, who assisted Bob Pulfer in joining TWIF, is currently TWIF Secretary General, a position he has occupied since 1987.

Scotland

As the last member of the British countries Scotland joined TWIF in 1981 and participated in the European Championships 1981 in Folkestone. Tug-of-war sport in Scotland existed long as is part of the famous Highland Games. It had however taken quite some time before the clubs agreed to establish a Scottish Association. The Scottish teams are predominantly active in the indoor discipline and participated in 90 international competitions. They won 11 World titles all in the indoor discipline and were the hosts of the Indoor World Championships 2004 in Glasgow.

India

Tug-of-war in India is very much a grassroots’ sport; it is done all over India. The India Association joined TWIF in 1981; however it was apparently difficult for the teams to participate in international competitions. It was only in 1992 that the first Indian teams participated in a TWIF event. In total India participated in 4 international competitions.

Canada

After the USA, Canada was the second country from the American continent to join TWIF in 1983. The relative small association participated in 31 international competitions and once reached the finals in 1998 in 560KG class. Currently the Canadian Association is very active promoting the sport in Canada through the introduction of the sport at school level.

Israel

Israel joined TWIF in the same year as Canada, during the Congress 1983 in Engelberg. The Israeli teams took part in 30 international competitions, but up to now did not reach any final in international competition. In the past TWIF arranged training courses at the Wingate Institute for Physical Education and Sports in Netanya with not much result as there was no effective link to the level of club coaches.

Japan

Japan is one of the leading countries in the tug-of-war sport in the Asian region and joined TWIF in 1985. The Japan Association is very well established in Japan with a great number of clubs and schools participating in national competitions. Tug-of-war in Asia is predominantly done in the indoor discipline and Japan took part in 66 international competitions of which 55 in the indoor discipline. The national teams participated in three World Games and won 6 medals (4 silver 2 bronze). They also won 6 World titles in the indoor discipline and one title in the Oceanic Games in 1997. In 1988 Japan organized the Goodwill Meet, an international indoor tournament with a worldwide participation as the sponsor was able to provide both accommodation and air tickets for the participants. More recently Japan was the host country for World Games 2001 in Akita, where tug-of-war sport was on the program with outdoor and indoor disciplines.

Pakistan

In the same year as Japan, Pakistan joined TWIF also in 1985. As a neighbour country to India they have also a widespread national tug-of-war sport, however until now they have not found the funding to participate in international competitions.

Namibia

Sport in Namibia in the eighties suffered from the sport ban on their neighbours South Africa. When the IOC agreed that Namibian sport teams could participate in international competitions, Namibia joined TWIF in 1988. Since then the teams from Namibia have participated in 17 international competitions. They also hosted the Oceanic Games in Swakopmund in 1999. In these Oceanic Games they had their best performance by reaching the finals and ending at the fourth place.

Philippines

After India, Japan and Pakistan, the Philippines were the fourth Asian country to join TWIF in 1991. They are in the same position as Pakistan; though they have national competitions, the lack of funds prevents them from participation in international competitions.

Belgium

As the southern neighbours of the Netherlands, tug-of-war sport was not unknown in Belgium. In the past the Belgium team had even won a bronze medal at the Olympic Games in 1920 in Antwerp, Belgium, the last Games with tug-of-war sport on the program. It however took until 1992 for the clubs to decide to establish a national association for the tug-of-war sport in Belgium. The national teams took part in 76 international competitions and they won one World title in the Junior category in 1998. They reached the finals of the competition in many events and were close to another title for their Junior team with the silver medal in the European Championship in 2005. Mr. Patrick van de Heuvel was elected Vice President at the TWIF Congress of 2007.

Latvia

Through the active support of Sweden, the Latvian tug-of-war sport was able to join
TWIF in 1994. They have participated in 35 international competitions since then. In 2002 they won a World title with their Junior team and reached the finals in 5 international competitions, but just missed the medals.

**Chinese Taipei**

As the fifth Asian country, Chinese Taipei joined TWIF in 1997. The tug-of-war sport in Chinese Taipei is strongly supported by their national Olympic Committee. With the support of the NOC they were able to promote the sport in the school system in Chinese Taipei. Teams from Chinese Taipei participated in 30 international competitions, of which the majority (23) competitions were indoor events. Chinese Taipei teams won 3 World titles, all in the women’s category in the indoor discipline. With that they qualified for participation in two World Games, where they won two World Games titles.

**China**

In the same year as Chinese Taipei, the China Tug-of-War Association joined TWIF in 1997. Teams from China took part in 18 international competitions. With a silver medal in the World Championship 2008, they had qualified for participation in World Games 2009; however the team has been withdrawn from participating. In the next they won the World title in the women’s category in the Indoor Championships in 2010.

**Kenya**

As the third African country, Kenya joined TWIF in 1997. TWIF has sent judges and coaches to Kenya for training courses, assisting Kenya to develop their national association and competitions. Kenya participated in the World Championships 2004 in Rochester, USA with a women’s team.

**Korea**

In 2000, Korea joined TWIF as the seventh Asian member country. They participated in various events in Asia and but to now participated only once in a TWIF event, during the World Championships 2004 in Rochester, USA.

**Lithuania**

With the assistance and support from both Latvia and Sweden, the tug-of-war sport in Lithuania was able to establish a national association that joined TWIF in 2003. Teams from Lithuania took part in 19 international events and twice reached the finals of the competition in the women’s category.

**Greece**

The Olympic Games of 1906 had tug-of-war sport on the program; Germany won the Gold medal and Greece the silver. It took the tug-of-war sport in Greece until 2004 before they joined TWIF and got in contact with the international tug-of-war sport again. The teams from Greece have not yet been able to participate in international competitions.

**Iran**

Immediately after the affiliation of Iran in 2004, the representative attended a TWIF Judges course, to obtain full knowledge of the international rules of the sport. In 2008, teams from Iran participated in the Indoor World Championships.

**Mongolia**

Mongolia joined TWIF in 2004 and participated in the same year in the Indoor World Championship in Scotland.

**Russia**

TWIF had been in contact with Russian sport officials for several years and in 2005 the Russian Association requested affiliation to TWIF. Their representatives participated in some international meetings; however until now Russian teams have not yet participated in international competitions.

**Cameroon**

Cameroon joined in the same year as Russia but has not yet participated in TWIF Championships.

**Hong Kong**

**Macau**

**Singapore**

**Sri Lanka**

**Vietnam**

These five countries joined in 2007 and have not yet participated in TWIF World Championships but have several times participated in the Asian Championships.

**Ukraine**

The Ukraine Association joined TWIF in 2007 and has already participated in 4 TWIF competitions. They even qualified for the indoor discipline of World Games 2009.

**Czech Republic**

**Malta**

**Mauritius**

**Morocco**

**Poland**

**Turkey**

**Zambia**

These countries are relatively new to the tug-of-war sport and have been in contact with TWIF for some years. They requested TWIF advice and assistance to establish a national tug-of-war association. The countries are very focussed on setting up their national structure for competitions and training of judges and coaches. Some countries have invited TWIF experts to further assist in the training and instructing of the coaches and judges.

**Serbia**

Serbia joined very recently in 2008 and have participated in 2 international competitions.

**Cambodia**

**Brunei Darussalam**

**Laos**

These Asian countries joined in 2008 and have participated in Asian competitions.

**Sierra Leone**

**Myanmar**

**Estonia**

The above countries joined in 2010; they have been in contact with TWIF for some years. Estonia was assisted in its development by Scandinavian TWIF members.
Eyes on stalks

Tug-of-war is no jury sport, like Gymnastics or Artistic Skating. The result of a tug-of-war pull is based on defeating the opponent. The role of a Judge is purely to ensure that the pull is played fair and within the rules. The judges observe the teams to see whether they pull the rope in accordance with the rules. The official rule simply says that in pulling position only the feet can touch the surface and the rope can only be grasped with the bare hands. Violation of the rules such as for example sitting on the ground or locking the rope is an offence. In case of an infringement of the rule by a puller, the team will be penalized with a caution. The third caution results in disqualification of the team, resulting in a victory of the opponent.

The judge stands on the middle line and observes the teams to the left and right of him. As the angle of the human vision is limited to more or less hundred and forty degrees, it is obvious that the judge needs to turn his head frequently sideways. But the judge is unable to see what happens on the opposite side of the rope. Therefore the judge has the assistance of two side judges, who each observe one team. When they see an infringement, they signal the offence to the centre judge. It's up to the discretion of the centre judge to caution the team.

In comparison to referees in other team sports such as football/soccer, the job of a tug-of-war judge is not physically demanding. He can stay on the same place during the match, it’s however a matter of concentration to monitor the actions of the teams. Mentally his task is more demanding as the judge has a direct effect on the result of a match. After two cautions to a team, his decision to caution the team for the third and last time will result in the loss of the pull.

All judges of the TWIF Panel of Judges are qualified through a TWIF Judges Course. The performance of the judges is assed at each and every TWIF competition, to ensure that they remain on the required high standard. Nevertheless there are good judges and better judges. The most valuable capacities of a top Judge are consistency, objectivity and being observant in order not to miss a trick. In the tug-of-war sport there are no individual stars in a team, however every puller has its own quality which contribute to the overall performance of the team. A good and a fair judge does not influence the result of a competition, but through consistent and objective judging the judge improves the quality of the event. As such the judges contribute to the attractiveness of the tug-of-war sport.

The starting procedure is controlled by arm and hand signs of the judge. In 1980 TWIF introduced a set of signals to communicate the judge’s decisions to the spectators and recorders. The tug-of-war sport has many traditions which are well and long preserved. One of these traditions has been that the judge’s uniform consisted of a blazer and a cap. Making arm signs did not quite fit with the wearing of blazers, yet it took until 2001 at the World Games in Akita, Japan for a more fitting uniform consisting of a polo shirt and a sweater to be introduced.
What’s in a name means that the name is not important as long as everybody understands what you mean. Participants of the tug-of-war sport don’t worry about the name, as they know very well what it means. However when you send a letter to an embassy to inquire whether there is any tug-of-war in that country and the reply is that they have no tugboats from the war; apparently not everybody has understood what you meant.

Rope pulling
In many languages the name for “tug-of-war” consist of two parts; translated in English these words are: rope and pull (see table). These two words clearly explain the essence of the sport, “pulling on a rope”.

A peaceful sport called war
Why then in the English name the reference to “war” whereas the sport is unquestionably a peaceful non-contact team competition? The explanation lies in the fact that the English phrase “tug-of-war” is very old; its history going back to the origin of the diversity of languages in Europe.

Roots in old Germanic languages
Though not many English speaking people are aware of it, the English language, like so many other European languages, stems from old Germanic languages. Digging deeper into the linguistic past, it is found that the name originates from the archaic words, toga and werra coming from old Scandinavian, Germanic and Frisian languages.

Perfect description of the sport
From this little trip through the linguistic past of the tug-of-war it is not difficult to find that the meaning of the name is;

**a Contest of pulling with great force and persistent effort**

After so many centuries, this description is still a very clear definition of the tug-of-war sport.

If one day you happen to see the sport on television, would you however not identify a name like “Rope pulling” more easily with this sport?

**But then again what’s is in a name ..........**
No individual stars

It’s unlikely that you are not familiar with football or “soccer” as it is known in America. Football is the best known and most played team sport worldwide. The success of a football team is of course the result of team effort, however not every player is of the same importance to the team. There are top players who make the difference for a football team. That’s why there is a huge transfer market for individual players, moving from one club to the other. There are many more sports where the team is made up from individual “stars”; stars who are decisive for the success of a team. But there is hardly any other sport than tug-of-war, where each team member is as important as the other.

Clubs are the backbone of the sport.

The tug-of-war sport has no “transfer” market and clubs members normally stay with their club for their entire active tug-of-war career. Top clubs in international tug-of-war competitions have mostly a long history; some clubs are even older than their national association. Tug-of-war clubs are relatively small, especially in comparison to football clubs. Many tug-of-war clubs can just form two teams, which is precisely the thing for a good training session. Their accommodation was and still is modest; a small clubhouse (more often than not built by club members), a training field for tug-of-war practice with some kind of home-built derrick to hoist weights equal to the total team weight. In many cases the facilities of the club are located in the yard of a member or a supporter of the club. Most tug-of-war clubs initially started as group of friends with the aspiration to form a tug-of-war team. After some time it became indispensable to bring some more structure to the “wild bunch” of friends, in order to get some support from local authorities and to affiliate to national sports organizations and then they form a “real sports club”.

Title collectors

In spite of the small size of clubs and their simple accommodation, the tug-of-war athletes (pullers) train longer and more intense than most other non-professional sportsmen. Over the years many clubs have proven that commitment and hard training pays off. The many titles won by longstanding clubs like Engelberg (SUI), Bosley Wood Treatment (ENG), Eibergen (NED) and Boley (IRL) are the results of a lot of training and commitment. These clubs have existed for a great many years, but are not huge in membership. Over the years of their existence, these clubs have been able to continuously renew their teams with fully committed pullers, willing to deeply suffer pain during their training and competitions.

Engelberg (Switzerland) winning one of its numerous titles in Assen Netherlands

Bosley won a lot of international cups but also on the national basis they are collectors of trophies
Effective training
Success in sport does not only depend on the amount of training, but also on the effectiveness of the training. It is amazing to see how well-organized training leads to success in the tug-of-war sport. The Chinese Taipei club team from the Taipei Sports University proved in the indoor discipline that success in the tug-of-war sport does not require years and years of experience, but structured and effective training, forming an almost perfect unity and unison in the team. Also in the outdoor men’s division, new clubs like Valleitrekkers (NED) and Velkonis (LAT) proved that young clubs can generate winners.

Role of clubs
Over the years the role and position of the clubs in the sport and society has changed and expanded. At the start the only objective and interest of tug-of-war clubs was to win the competitions. When pullers became too old for competitive sport, some of them happily accepted the option to be trained for a position of Judge in the sport. This way the retired puller remained involved in the sport. In more recent years, tug-of-war clubs realized that the continuity of their club could not only be secured by replacing an old puller by a younger man, but that they needed to train youngsters. When they found that it’s not easy to integrate a teenager in a team of mature men, clubs realized also that they needed to do some active promotion for the tug-of-war sport in order to attract young athletes and to build teams with a new generation of tug-of-war addicts. Not every good puller is also a good coach, let alone a mentor for youngsters, so clubs actively hunted for qualified people willing to become coaches and youth leaders in tug-of-war clubs. Though many clubs still use all kinds of facilities or halls in the yard of a sponsor or friend to provide just enough space for the indoor or outdoor training, municipalities are becoming more agreeable to having tug-of-war clubs use the local gym for indoor training, including the weight room for strength training.

With a wider responsibility and obligation towards society than just training for the best performance, clubs have expanded their staff of trainers and coaches with facility managers, youth leaders and mentors. So even more than in the past clubs remain the essential back-bone of the sport.
Founder member
Every sport is governed by its own international federation, however the overall control of international sport in the sixties was in the hands of the IOC. Some sports wanted a stronger role for the IF’s in the evolution of international sport, therefore several International Federations (IF’s) met regularly to exchange their views on international sports development. The creation of a stable organization ensuring good relations between IF’s, Olympic or not and regardless of their status, would be a logical consequence to these informal meetings. Also the meetings of the IF’s with the IOC could thus be better supported. The initiative of these IF’s materialized in 1967 with the foundation of GAISF, the assembly for both IF’s of Olympic and non-Olympic sports. In particular the non-Olympic Federations, now had a forum to express their point of view. Many of these non-Olympic sports had the desire to be included in the Olympic program, however through the discussion with the IOC they realized that it would not be possible for all of them to be included. Consequently they looked for other options to expose their sport in a multi-sport event. Taekwondo was one of these non-Olympic sports and in 1980 its President Dr Un Yung Kim, invited twelve international federations to meet in Seoul. This meeting became the inaugural meeting of the World Games, a platform for sports that did not have the global exposure of the Olympic sports. The twelve federations, including the Tug of War International Federation TWIF, joined forces to form the World Games Council, later renamed International World Games Association (IWGA).

TWIF involvement
From the start of the IWGA in 1980, TWIF has been involved in the organization of the World Games. TWIF President Fugi Fuchs, was Vice President of the World Games till his death in 1983. TWIF President Co Koren, was member of the Financial Committee from 1981 until 1989 when he became Secretary General of the IWGA, a position he kept until his retirement in 2010.

The development
Presently the IWGA has more than 30 members and limits its membership, just like the Olympics, in order to keep the event manageable. Over the years several of the IWGA member federations have been included into the program of the Olympic Games, such as Badminton, Taekwondo, Baseball, Softball, Triathlon and recently Rugby.

Tug-of-war in WG
For the tug-of-war sport, the World Games is the highest and most prestigious event. Only the top six countries qualify for participation. Tug-of-war has been on the program of all eighth World Games, since the first World Games 1981 in Santa Clara, USA. Starting with only the outdoor discipline, tug-of-war currently participates with outdoor and indoor and with men and women. In the first editions of the World Games, TWIF could participate with the British member countries; later the IWGA adopted the Olympic rules for national participation and the British members now participate as Great Britain like in the Olympics.

WG 1981 Santa Clara, USA
The first World Games in 1981 Santa Clara, USA was a real test event as the young IWGA organization and the American organizers had no experience of a multi-sport event with the magnitude of the World Games. After the event, the IWGA was confronted with enormous debts, which took years to settle. The participants however did not notice any of these problems and were very happy with the accommodation.
World Games were held in London, the home base of West Nally. The metropolis London however was not a good choice for the World Games 1985, as the games were lost in the huge city. The venues for the various sports were scattered all around the city and the accommodation likewise; the games missed the special multi-sport atmosphere as was felt in Santa Clara. The program for tug-of-war was the same as in 1981, but this time only the top six countries per weight class qualified for participation. Ireland was the definite champion of the tug-of-war event as they won the World Games title in both weight classes.

WG 1989 Karlsruhe, GER
Through the input of the IWGA Secretary General, Mr. Rolf Noess, the World Games 1989 was hosted in Karlsruhe, Germany. These games were the first real success both financially and in publicity for the World Games organization. The Karlsruhe Organizing Committee had staged a real multi-sport event and the hospitality of the city was well felt by all participants and for the first time the event had good television coverage through the German host broadcaster. The program for tug-of-war was unchanged and this time Switzerland won its first World Games title in 640KG and Great Britain in 720KG. At the IWGA Annual General Meeting after The World Games 1989, Secretary General Noess stepped down and was succeeded by Mr. Koren, President of TWIF. In the next elections President Kim was succeeded by Mr. Froehlich, at that time Secretary General of Trampoline.

WG 1993 The Hague, NED
In the preparations for Word Games 1993, the city of The Hague could not find a satisfactory agreement with Patrick Nally, resulting in the withdrawal of West Nally as sponsor and marketing partner. As a consequence the participants had to pay for the accommodation instead of getting free accommodation as is the rule in World Games. The program for tug-of-war had been expanded to include the indoor discipline as a demonstration sport. The games in The Hague were quite compact; the traditional Houtrust sport complex being selected as the center of the sports activities. Both the outdoor and indoor disciplines of tug-of-war were staged in Houtrust. In the outdoor discipline the teams from Switzerland dominated both in the 640 and 720 weight class. As the outdoor tug-of-war on the World Games program was taken by the men, the women's category was selected for the new indoor discipline in 520KG. The Netherlands won the first World Games title in the indoor discipline, followed by Spain and United States, winning their first World Games medal.

WG 1997 Lahti, FIN
The IWGA had signed an agreement with the City of Port Elizabeth in South Africa for the organization of the World Games 1997. The preparations for Word Games 1997 in Port Elizabeth were well underway when Mr. Nelson Mandela became President of South Africa in 1994. Due to the changing political climate after the fall of the "white government", the City Council of Port Elizabeth decided to cancel the contract. The IWGA Secretary General negotiated the financial conditions for the cancelation of the City of Port Elizabeth, which ensured that the IWGA could continue its operations and the search for another host city. Although The Word Games 1993 in The Hague were not a real success, a strong point had been the compactness of the games. The IWGA in its search for another host city for World Games 1997 certainly looked for a city with a compact infrastructure. Such a city was found in Finland in the City of Lahti. The organizers in Lahti did a terrific job.
by organizing the event in only two years time after the cancelation of Port Elizabeth. The program of tug-of-war in World Games was expanded after The Hague. The indoor discipline was expanded with the light weight (480KG) to cater for the Asian countries. The venue for the outdoor tug-of-war competition was a football stadium with covered stands which gave the facility an excellent atmosphere. In the 640KG class, Spain won their first World Games title followed by Switzerland and Ireland. In the heavy weight (720KG) class it was The Netherlands that won the gold medal, followed by Sweden with silver and Ireland with the bronze medal. The hall for the indoor tug-of-war was not the most luxurious facility, but functional to accommodate the indoor matting. In the second time that indoor was on the program, the women’s teams from The Netherlands were superb winning both titles in 480KG and 520KG. Japan and Spain both won a silver and a bronze in those weight classes.

WG 2001 Akita, JPN
After North America and Europe, the World Games moved to another continent by selecting Akita as the host city in Japan. Dealing with Asian organizers was an new experience for the IWGA organization as well as the participating sports, if only by the language problem. Akita provided excellent sports facilities and the weather was nice and warm, sometimes too warm for comfort, causing even a break in the program due to a typhoon luckily without much harm. The tug-of-war program contained both the outdoor and indoor disciplines. To honour the host country, where tug-of-war is predominantly done as indoor sport, the Outdoor Men 640KG was replaced by the Indoor Men 600KG. The Akita organizers had selected the huge Sky Dome as the venue for indoor tug-of-war. Beyond everybody’s expectations the dome was packed with spectators, as indoor tug-of-war is a very popular sport in Japan. Great Britain, participating with England, Scotland and Northern Ireland took the gold and the silver medal, while the host country by winning the bronze medal got their first medal in World Games participation. In the women’s category the titles went to The Netherlands and Spain respectively in the 520KG and 480KG class. For the outdoor event the organizers had selected an excellent football stadium at the Akita University. The crowd of spectators was definitely smaller as for the indoor event, but under excellent warm weather the teams in the 680KG class showed a good and fierce competition. The title this time going to The Netherlands, followed by Switzerland and Sweden.

WG 2005 Duisburg, GER
During the World Games 1989 in Karlsruhe, Germany had showed its skill in organizing big events. The Duisburg Organizing Committee surely proved the statement that Germans are excellent organizers. The axis of the sport facilities was the Wedau sport park very near the city centre. The new Arena Stadium, the home base of the Duisburg football club MSV, was an outstanding facility for the Opening and Closing Ceremony. The outdoor tug-of-war was on the "Dreieck Wiese" a special prepared grass court with an outer track for speed roller-skating. As the organizers had used a bit too much sand in the preparation of the field, the matches were longer than normal, but very exciting. The outdoor tug-of-war attracted huge crowds and the organizers had to enlarge the spectator area and print extra tickets. The competition in 640KG was won by Switzerland, followed by Sweden and Germany. For Germany this bronze medal was their first World Games medal, extra celebrated as the World Games were in their home country. The 680KG class, which became the heavy class after Akita, was won again by The Netherlands, this time followed by Sweden and Ireland. The hall for indoor, only a few hundred meters away from the "Dreieck Wiese", was not big but catered well for the spectators. The women’s teams had paid for their accommodation in all previous World Games events, but now being part of the officials competition program, they for the first time had free accommodation at the Wedau Sportschule. The official program limited the indoor discipline to only one weight class, for which the 520KG was selected. Chinese Taipei, had participated in three previous World Championships, and qualified by a fourth place in the World Championships 2004. In their first appearance at the World Games they won the title in the 520KG class, leaving the silver for Japan and the bronze to The Netherlands.

WG 2009 Kaohsiung, TPE
The World Games 2001 in Akita had left a very good impression in Asia, so Chinese Taipei made a bid and the City of Kaohsiung was granted the hosting of the World Games 2009. The language difficulties during the groundwork of the event were even more pronounced than in

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Akita. The cooperation with the organizers was very cumbersome for the IWGA as well as for the participating sports. However when the Opening Ceremony was finished and most participants had arrived, everybody was amazed at the excellent support and assistance of the great many young volunteers who made the World Games 2009 a success. The tug-of-war events used the sports facilities of one of the many high schools in Akita, which proved to be excellent venues. In the outdoor 640KG class Switzerland won its fourth World Games title in that weight class. The silver medal won by Germany was their second after the bronze in Duisburg. The Netherlands were pleased with bronze which was their second medal in 640KG after their first in Santa Clara. In the outdoor 680KG, The Netherlands won their third consecutive title in this weight class after a fierce battle with Switzerland. The bronze in this competition went to Great Britain, their first medal in the 680KG class. It was a great and outstanding performance to win their second consecutive title in this competition. The Netherlands who won the silver medal was no real match to the superb Chinese Taipei team. The bronze medal for Great Britain in this weight class was also their first medal in this weight class.

**Exposure in the games**

Over the eight World Games, the tug-of-war sport has certainly proven to be an attractive sport for dedicated spectators. The worldwide crowd of media (television/web) spectators however are not familiar with the tug-of-war sport. The tug-of-war sport, like many other World Games sports, needs to improve its presentation to the media, so that the sport can expose its potential media attractiveness to a global audience.

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<th>Country</th>
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Among the many songs of Paul McCartney is a song called “Ebony and Ivory”. The basic line of the lyrics of the song goes; "Ebony and ivory live together in perfect harmony". McCartney’s song refers to the black and white keys on his piano; black and white the most used phrase to express contrast and inconsistency, but in music the black and white keys live together in perfect harmony.

The contrasting and opposite emotions which harmoniously live together in tug-of-war, are the agony of the strain and pain on the one side and the ecstasy of the delight of victory on the other side.

The expression; *pain is only temporary but fame is forever*, is well phrased for the tug-of-war sport. The emotion of pain is soon forgotten but the sweet taste of success lasts long.

So the “Ebony and Ivory” of the tug-of-war sport is the **“Agony and Ecstasy”**

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Supporters
The tug-of-war events always have a fair crowd of supporters watching the competitions. The tug-of-war supporters are the fans from clubs and national teams; they travel with the team to all national and international events and know everything about the sport. They act as the ninth puller for the team. The fans, the enthusiastic and devoted supporters are very important to the tug-of-war sport, not only to the teams but also to the organizers as the fans need accommodation and catering, which is an economic factor for the organizers. The fans are the colourful element in the audience, each with their specific features; Swedes with pseudo Viking hats, the Swiss with cowbells, the Dutch wearing anything that is orange and with lions and the Japanese with their flags and drums. They enjoy the international meetings and spend their holidays following the national teams to the Continental and World Championships. They are insiders in the sport, enjoying the game and not looking for hooliganism.

Hook the spectators
The objective of TWIF to bolster the popularity of the tug-of-war sport includes attracting big audiences at the events as well as for television- and web broadcasts (conventional and internet). The fans are devoted to the sport and will continue to attend the events as long as the competitions are exiting and the organizer offers them attractive hosting packages. To make sure that a spectator, who is visiting a tug-of-war event for the first time, will come again, he or she has to get interested in the sport. The tug-of-war sport is exciting but you need to know the rules of the sport, even if they are easy to understand. Future development in the sport will focus on presentation of the sport. The development should not only be based on the input from the insiders but also from the point of view of the public that is unfamiliar with the sport and the rules. When such innovations are implemented, spectators will become supporters.

Spectators
Current international tug-of-war events such as the World Games and the World Championships are also attracting a notable crowd of spectators. So nowadays the tug-of-war audience consists of supporters and spectators. These two attendance groups of watchers of the tug-of-war sport are quite contrasting. The fans know everything of the tug-of-war sport. They know not only the quality of their own team but are also familiar with the strong and weak points of the opponent teams. The spectators are the public buying a ticket for the World Games event or citizens of the host city of the World Championship; they do not know the tug-of-war sport, but are curious to watch this unfamiliar sport.
The best of us

Tug of war in the Olympics
The celebration of the 50th anniversary of TWIF, is exactly 90 years after the last Olympic Games with tug-of-war on the program.

Over the years TWIF has published numerous articles on the Olympic period of the tug-of-war sport. On the website of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) there was always a reference to the "discontinued Olympic sports" with pictures of the tug-of-war competitions from the period 1900-1920. In fact, the Olympic database contains all details of the Olympic medals winners of tug-of-war from that period.

Olympic promotion campaign
Just before the Olympic Winter Games 2010 in Vancouver CAN, the IOC restructured its website, to make it more attractive and flashy to the younger generation. As part of the website’s "face-lift", the IOC introduced a promotional campaign. The objective of this campaign is to communicate the Olympic key values of Excellence, Friendship and Respect to a global youth audience. The theme of the campaign is The Best of Us – "a simple, powerful idea that goes beyond cultures and borders, motivating young people around the world to participate in sport by demonstrating that sport can bring out the best in themselves".

Tug of war video clip
One of the video clips on the IOC website (and of course on the very popular “YouTube”) is the video “All Together Now”. In the video clip, six Olympic athletes from various sports, are competing in a giant tug-of-war match. As the clip progresses it shows that the athletes are not competing against each other, but working together to "unite the world in celebration of the Olympic Games".

Whether it’s coincidence or not, the same title "All together now" was used for an 18 mm promotion film of the English Tug of War Association in the seventies. As stated on the website, the IOC uses this video clip; to communicate the fundamental Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect. According to the IOC the promotional video clip with the tug-of-war conveys; "not only the determination and excellence of Olympic athletes, but also their unique ability to bring the world together for the Olympic Games in a massive display of optimism and inspiration".

A good augury
The TWIF and its members should be proud that the IOC has chosen the tug-of-war sport as an example to express the "determination and excellence of Olympic athletes" and their "unique ability to bring the world together for the Olympic Games."

The clip “All together now” should also be seen as a good augury, a prophecy to the TWIF desire to have the tug-of-war sport back on the program somewhere in the future.
The five rings of the well known Olympic symbol represents the union of the five continents and the meeting of athletes from throughout the world at the Olympic Games. This means that every international sport should have member countries from all five continents. Representation in sport should not be limited to a specific region but must have a real global spread, which is referred to as "the universality of the sport".

**Cradle of sport in Europe**

The cradle of TWIF stood in Europe (1960 GBR and SWE), but through the affiliation of countries from Africa (RSA 1973), America (USA 1978), Oceania (Australia 1980) and Asia (India 1981) the current TWIF family of 57 member countries embraces all five continents of the world.

The American continent in the Olympics comprises both of North and South America. Representation of the Americas in TWIF is currently limited to the USA and Canada, both from North America. Over the years there have been links with South America through contacts in Brazil, Argentine and Porto Rico. The contact with Brazil was hopeful as tug-of-war like many other popular sports in Brazil was done on the beach in Copacabana. None of the contacts in Latin America until now have materialized into a formal membership.

**Gateway Columbia**

In the coming years TWIF representatives will visit Cali in Columbia in preparation for the next World Games in 2013. This provides an excellent opportunity to introduce the organized tug-of-war sport in Latin America. Columbia is one of the northern countries of Latin America bordering both to the Atlantic Ocean (Gulf of Mexico) and the Pacific Ocean with the neighbouring countries Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru. Cali is easily accessible with direct flights from the USA (Miami) as well as Europe (Madrid). A good opportunity to introduce the tug-of-war sport in Latin America would be the option to organize a tug-of-war test event in Cali. This would assist the organizers in their preparation and at the same time promote the tug-of-war sport in the region. It might also initiate the set up of a national tug-of-war association in Columbia. That would be the start of organized tug-of-war sport in Latin America, completing the universality of tug-of-war by covering the entire globe.
The development of the international tug-of-war-of-war sport implemented by TWIF has focused on improving the quality of the sport and TWIF has been very successful in doing so. Modifications in the rules resulted in a fair and equal "field of play" for the teams. The scope and quality of the training has very much enhanced the athletic abilities of the pullers and the competition venues are now real sport arenas with all required facilities.

Improvement of tug-of-war is ongoing, yet future changes will come even faster, similar to the ever increasing speed of technology development in iPhones, e-books and the like in real life. The focus of the tug-of-war development needs to change from total "participant oriented" to media and spectator interest. For more than one reason the tug-of-war sport needs greater publicity to attract media and spectator attention. This is very much a "chicken and egg" situation. To get publicity you need the media, to attract the media you need publicity. TWIF needs to focus on the presentation of the sport to spectators and the media. There is a range of items to improve the presentation of the sport, both at the venue as well as in video/television summaries of the sport. Over the years the tug-of-war arenas have become wider, increasing the distance between spectators and the pulling lane. This has created the need for better visual markers on the rope as well as on the ground. Visual hand signals indicated by the judges were part of the improvement of the rules, though the continuous indication of the number of cautions by keeping the arms in the air is a bit clumsy and uncomfortable for the judge. Light signals would improve presentation and would make it easier for the judge to monitor the teams.

Live television broadcast is exceptional for the tug-of-war events and a bit difficult to plan due to the unpredictable length of the matches. Properly edited summaries of competitions however provide attractive video shows for television and internet broadcast. Such summaries require well designed video graphics providing the needed information on the match to the viewers. Most information is readily available for such graphics; team names, points scored and actual cautions. Further implementation of technology in the sport will be required to show additional information such as the distance pulled and the actual pressure on the rope.

Video/TV graphics

Here the "chicken and egg" will work again, when there is publicity, there is sponsor interest and with that the funding becomes available to implement innovations and new technologies. Attracting media attention to the tug-of-war sport through improved presentation of the sport has just begun and the next ten years will show the results of these efforts.
Taking pleasure in physical action is an element of playing. Playing is very important for kids. In his book “Toys” photographer Julio Etchart shows kids playing from all over the world, including tug-of-war. Playing tug-of-war like kids do, does not need any equipment; it is “back to the basics” of the sport. In South Africa, Steve a pupil of a primary school in the wine region made a long coach trip with his school team to the national junior tug-of-war championships. At school he often “played” tug-of-war like so many kids all over the word. Only recently he and his classmates had really trained for the school tug-of-war competitions. Steve’s team participated in the national junior tug-of-war championships together with teams from other primary schools in South Africa as well as teams from high schools. Steve and his friend Thaba, aged eleven, decided last year, when they participated for the first time in the school championships, to join the local tug-of-war club as they also wanted to play tug-of-war outside the school season. The tug-of-war sport is well established in South African schools, just as in Chinese Taipei, where the national championship is held in the “Big Mac”, the indoor dome of the national sports academy in Taipei City. In other countries national associations have developed projects to introduce the tug-of-war sport into the school sports curriculum. National associations of Germany, England, Netherlands, Belgium and Sweden have joined forces in GENSB and organize a similar annual competition by rotation in one of the five countries. Until now they have not yet established a formal link with the school sports programmes in these countries. Tug-of-war is age-old, but the international federation TWIF is only 50 years young and still maturing. In the way forward TWIF recognizes the importance of continuance and ensures that actions are sustainable. Sustainability however is not limited to current activities only, a robust and lasting mass of active pullers is crucial for the tug-of-war sport. Several associations have recognized the importance of the next generation of pullers. They have realized that today’s children are the active pullers of 2020; only ten years from now. In most school sports programs, gymnastics, football (soccer) and other ball sports are the main activities. Some national associations have effectively introduced tug-of-war in schools, others have designed activities and projects to implement the tug-of-war sport in the curriculum of primary schools. Activities to make kids familiar with the tug-of-war sport, increases the chance that they enjoy it and select it as their sport and join a local club. If they do, the current mass of active pullers will increase and also the continuity for the next generation of pullers is secured.

In 2021, Steve and Thaba from South Africa will be 22 years old and might be selected for the national tug-of-war team representing South Africa in The World Games 2021. Those World Games could even be staged in a City in South Africa; who knows!
All around the world kids enjoy playing and play tug-of-war.

twif is member of [International World Association] [ARISF] [Spartaccord]