



**FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK**



Co Koren, President TWIF

*The speed of time. It's astonishing but it was July when we had the World Games 2005 in Duisburg and September when we met for the European Championship in Cento, Italy. It all seems just a short time ago. Time flies as I realized when I visited Killarney for a coordination meeting with the organizers of the coming World Indoor Championship. The roads in the valley around the Killarney Lakes are embraced by the splendid warm colors of the oak trees, showing their full beauty in this autumn season.*

*After returning home this week from a short visit to Germany, I watched the first World Cup Speed skating on television, a sure sign that the winter season has started. For tug of war this means that in the northern hemisphere the indoor season starts and teams will be training and preparing for the next World Indoor Championships in Killarney, Ireland. Following the successful competitions at the World Games 2005 in Germany I am sure that many national teams have accepted the challenge to compete for the top six positions to qualify for the next World Games in Chinese Taipei.*

*The recent years in TWIF were marked by fast developments in various aspects of the sport, of which the acquisition of new members is certainly one of the important issues. The amount of projects for the further advancement of the tug of war sport is growing and so is the time needed to realize and implement the great variety of projects. However, life goes on at a steady pace of sixty minutes per hour and you cannot slow it down or stop it; there are only twenty-four hours in one day.*

*But if the work is done by four persons instead of two, you only need half the time. So TWIF will need that extra manpower (or womanpower) which is surely available within the tug of war community; let's make sure that they come forward.*

*Looking out of my office the trees are very hazy due to the fog, but soon they might be covered by the first snow. Time flies indeed and by the time you read this magazine it is certainly nearly Christmas, therefore I use this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*



**SEMINAR FOCUS: YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

In this second part of the report on the TWIF seminar that was held prior to the 2005 congress in Cape Town, South Africa, the presentations given by Mr Paul van der Merwe from South Africa and Doctor Johan van Heerden from the Pretoria University, are covered. (Note: the presentations by Mr Cathal McKeever from Northern Ireland and Dr Tzai-Li-Li from Chinese Taipei, were covered in the June edition.)

**MR PAUL VAN DER MERWE**, South Africa, outlined their aims:

- to introduce young people to our sport
- to create a love and passion for the sport
- to create opportunity to participate in sport
- to create an environment where education supersedes all and the interest of the child supersedes everything!

In South Africa we have the SAJTU, which is managed as a separate body away from the seniors. We have no bottom age group and it goes up to under 19 yrs. Boys and girls pull in mixed teams. We currently have 25 schools/clubs with around 1,300 pullers and have 2 divisions Barefoot and Boots Leagues. The Barefoot League is for children under 14 yrs attending primary school, with weight classes 280 kg (under 12's), + 320, 360 & 400 kg. Boots League is for over 14 yrs attending high school. The U19 yrs - some pupils may be out of school and working, weight classes 440, 480, 520 & 600 kg. The Junior season is mid January to end of March, a very short period. So we have



approximately 8 or 9 weeks for our season, our competitions are attended by approximately 8 or 9 clubs. We have 80 teams participating in 9 divisions, which covers a radius of 150-200 kilometres. We have 6 Saturdays of club competitions. One Provincial Championship is held prior to the SA

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Championships, which are held over 2 days with between 120 - 140 teams. The SA Championships is in 2 parts, Championship and Plate Division. The Plate Division is for beginners and weaker teams. Everyone that turns up gets a pull, we do not turn anyone away.

We use TWIF rules with a few amendments; no substitutes allowed - only for injury; boots are standard but may have grooves in the sole; no glue or other aids are allowed. Our pullers are well disciplined, well organised and we have excellent parent support. But we have a short season, so we have to adapt our training to this. Our problems are the long distances to travel, conflict with other sports, shortages of coaches, and difficulties to establish new teams. We have very few numbers transferring from Junior to Senior tug of war. Our winning team at 560 kg represents SA in TWIF Championships.



PAUL VAN DER MERWE

The 4th Presentation was given by **DOCTOR JOHAN VAN HEERDEN**, who gave a background to his report - the first ever for tug of war. The report looked at various issues and we will relate this to youth; it is not complete as we would like a lot more data and perhaps we can get this at future competitions. He said that in 2 days of competitions he was pleased that there were no injuries to youth, which is a good thing. For the purpose of this

presentation we will compare the M560 to Y560. Our data shows no injuries to either men or youth 560 teams. The men's heavier weight classes had less injuries per puller with the highest being in W560 and M640.

Types of injuries: 78% were muscle strain, which is only to be expected; but perhaps this is because teams are not taking enough time for warm-up; other injuries - 11% muscle spasm, 11% joint strain. It also showed 67% of injuries that occurred involved the puller taking no further part, but 33% were able to return with no disability. The site of injuries showed 44% in the lower back, which is to be expected, hip and knee 22%, and thigh 12%, which is normally hamstrings & cramp. Onset of injuries - 56% were chronic, which implies this was not the first time treatment was received for the injury. 44% were first time injuries, which tell us pullers are participating with existing niggling injuries and are not getting the necessary treatment. In the long term this can be detrimental on their performance and general state of health.

Activity risk on the rope, showed anchor-12%, No.6 -32%, No.3 - 12%, and un stated 44%, so the anchor has a high instance. Unfor-



## TUG OF WAR CHINA TUG OF WAR CHINA TUG OF WAR CHINA

The Northern Ireland tug of war squad, made up of members from Richhill, Ballyhegan and Leo's Boys, have just returned home from a successful and memorable trip to the Peoples Republic of China. The squad which was the first ever Western side to visit China flew out from Dublin via London on a long flight to Shanghai. After delays and another flight to Chengdu followed by a two hour car journey through the vast country side they arrived in the mountainous area of Xiling. This was their home for the next two days. It was an extremely interesting place, partly because of its great natural beauty and also because it was completely unspoilt and untouched by the all enveloping grasp of western culture.

After two days the squad moved on to the city of Chengdu, which is the capital of Sichuan Province. They were treated like royalty, being transported anywhere they wished and guided by a young University graduate called Ling, who could not have been more attentive. The squad enjoyed visits to many local historical sites and the trip to the Giant Panda habitat on the outskirts of the city was a special treat.

Amid all the other activities it would have been easy to forget the main purpose of the visit but that had to be central to everything else. The Friday afternoon was spent training and coming to terms with the different competition surface, which was the mat imported from Japan in 2004. None of the team had ever seen it before, although the coach, Alan Walker and the manager, Cathal McKeever has competed on it in Tokyo in 1988. There was, on balance, some relief that it was not as *bad* as many had thought.

The international match between the visitors and the Chinese champions took place on the Saturday morning at a large indoor sports complex in Chengdu. The Chinese team, An Shan had travelled for 48 hours by train and were supported by a 'B' team, Chang Qin, from somewhat nearer the city. The Northern Ireland lads were somewhat apprehensive as the hosts were of unknown ability, although it was known that they had done well against Japan last year. The latter are the reigning World 600 kilo champions, so the apprehension had a sound basis. As it turned out the Chinese Champions were a good team and the visitors were wise not to underesti-

tunately, we have no data for position No.1 and 2. This shows us that position 4 and 5 are relevantly injury free. 56% of injuries occurred before the competition and 44% in competition, which I said earlier, most injuries occur during training.

Injury profile: the risk is low severity most equal, non returns to competition. Women are at a greater risk than men or youth, lower back muscle strain is most common, and again training risk is higher than competition risk. Kinematic Analysis of Attack vs Defence, our Biomechanical Laboratory took live footage of teams identified by TWIF to able to excel, the outcome was:

- Kinematic Analysis of Attack vs Defence
- body angles good
- knee angles poor
- trunk angles good
- height of centre of gravity (COG) good = high on attack - low on defence
- base of support
- small on attack - wide on defence

On the strength and flexibility in terms of stature the Y560 and M560 had similar heights, to my mind the M560 are very fit and the heavier weight classes maybe not be quite so good. From our results it seems the M560 are 'making the weight' through dehydration, which is not a good thing, and if that is the case maybe these people should be pulling in a heavier weight class. Strength and grip is average, back strength Y560 and M560 is good. Dynamic (jumping etc) leg power & strength of knee is poor. Physiological responses, this exercise was very time consuming. A normal heart rate would be 60 and this shows a high of 158, when resting before a pull 80. So you can see in a 2 to 3 minute pull you do use a lot of energy and do get very tired. Therefore you need to do a lot of high intensity

training; sending an athlete on a 42 kilometre run is pointless.

Nutritional profile: This study was least successful, we distributed 250 questionnaires, only 30% were returned and of those only 36 could be used, and none were returned from the youth. However, it shows that pullers should be taking in more calories. The dietary habits were generally poor, with insufficient micronutrient intake of the following vitamins: A, B1, D, E, and Folic Acid etc.

**Cross Training Modality:** When you do exercise and gym work it is better to do things in a slow controlled way, this makes tug of war good for strength training.

**Mixed Gender Pulling:** Youth - I think if this is for fun its good. Age groups 6-12 yrs is good, 12-15 yrs good, 15-17 yrs good, but U23 and Senior then I think there are question marks. The age group is not as important as the weight of the individuals, and these are my thought alone. Adults - I would recommend in adults besides equal numbers on the rope, that they should also be in the same position on the rope. 4 x 4 participation in senior tug of war for fun is OK. But here we are talking about the real thing, what we are saying is YES the females are strong, but in comparison to the males of equivalent weight class they are not comparable. That is where the danger is. In other sports ladies have competed in mens leagues, but without success. In 4 x 4 it appears more research is needed, but from what we can tell position numbers, 2,4,5 & 7 seem less injury prone; so I would suggest this is as starting point. But after all, it is the administrators and the participants who need to use this knowledge as they wish.

**Doctor van Heerden's report is in full on the TWIF website, and all International Representatives have a copy of the full seminar report.**

*Contributed by: Tony Martin*

## WAR CHINA TUG OF WAR CHINA TUG OF WAR CHINA

mate them. They were physically very powerful but somewhat inexperienced and without the match fitness possessed by their guests. The competitions were pulled on a round robin basis with the Northern Ireland winning the finals of both the 600 and 640 kilo categories without dropping a point.

In the afternoon the squad conducted an extended coaching session, which included demonstration of training and competition techniques. The session beneficial to the host teams and they were most appreciative. On the Sunday Cathal McKeever conducted a Judges Course for the Chinese Judges and over 40 officials, when the international rules were discussed in detail. This was a useful exercise for all present and there was the opportunity for questions afterwards.

The Chinese officials hope to send a team to compete in the World Indoor Championships in Killarney in February and the experience of the visit will certainly have made them better representatives.

There is little doubt that if the Chinese can marshal the available manpower and support them with effective training the day cannot be far off when they will make a serious impression at World level. The Northern Ireland squad then spent their last two days in China visiting many places of interest having leaving their hosts at Chengdu, many of whom had tears in their eyes, such had been the friendship established. On leaving China they were well satisfied with their achievements. Not only were they successful in competition but they had also been the first ever western team to travel there. Perhaps more importantly they had helped to put down a sound basis for coaching and judging which will surely stand their hosts in good stead in years to come. Neither could one underestimate the ambassadorial impact made.

The visitors felt that in perhaps a very small way they made a positive contribution through the impression they created and the friendship established with their hosts.

*Full report by Cathal McKeever & edited by Rosemary Smith*



## HARRY HARBORD

Mr Harry Harbord the President of the Welsh Tug of War Association recently celebrated his 86th birthday. Harry first came to Wales whilst he was serving in the Army and he met his wife to be, whilst he was a patient in hospital in Merthyr Tydfil. After leaving the Army and marrying Enid who was one of the nurses from the hospital he then moved to live in Merthyr Tydfil to live and found work at the local Hoover Factory. He worked there until he retired in 1982.

Whilst at Hoovers he once again became involved in the sport of tug of war and pulled for the Hoover Team. In 1965 he convened a meeting of six tug of war teams and they formed the Dragon League which was the forerunner of the Welsh Branch of the Tug of War Association. In 1967 a meeting was convened between interested people and the Welsh Tug of War Association was formed. Harry was elected as Chairman of the Association from its formation and the late Penry Davies was the Vice President. He served as the Associations Chairman for twenty two years. In 1989 he was elected President of the Association for which he above all others was the chief motivator in its formation. His endless work for the sport was recognised when he was presented with the Award of Merit in acknowledgement for all the work he had done over the years for the sport of tug of war in Wales. Harry still is very active in the sport and never misses a competition, arriving early in the day setting up the scales etc in readiness for the arrival of the pullers. He also travels to all the World and European Championships, the last one being the European Outdoor Championships in Cento, Italy.

Sadly after eleven years of nursing his devoted wife Enid who had Alzheimer's as well as many other problems, she passed away. It was a twenty four hour job and the only respite he got was when a carer from Crossroads came to sit with Enid. His appreciation for all the help they gave him led him to be the main force behind forming the Carers Association of Merthyr Tydfil and setting up a branch of the Alzheimer's Society. He was elected Chairman of the Crossroads Association and has worked endlessly arranging trips for the people involved with caring for their loved ones.

Harry had just one son, Brian, but he has four grand children and many great grandchildren who have been a source of joy to him since Enid's death. He has been a great ambassador for the sport of tug of war both at home and world wide and has held many positions in the Association including Chairman, International Representative for Wales, Team Manager, Fund Raising Officer, Youth Liaison Officer, Judge and his present position of President of the Association. He is the only officer still present since the formation of the Welsh Tug of War Association thirty eight years ago. He said:

**'As for my self I have had a wonderful time over my fifty three years in the sport and have made many friends both home and abroad - may the Association progress to greater things.' The motto of our Association is 'Heb flinio, heb ildio' which translated means 'Unwearing, Unyielding' or in other words ' Never get tired, never give up!'**



## PHOTO COMPETITION

In the previous edition, TWIF announced a photo competition in order to obtain a series of unique photo's that could be used in the review of its brochure series. Thus far the reaction was limited to say the least and TWIF wishes to once again invite enthusiasts of the sport to submit unique material. We therefore publish a repeat of the original article inviting entries.

Interested parties are invited to enter their photo's (limit of 3 photo's per individual). TWIF will call on a panel of international photo and sport journalists to reduce the entries to the top 5 which will be publicised on the TWIF web-site. Visitors to the web-site will then be invited to vote. The person who's photo wins will be provided free accommodation and meals at a TWIF championship of their choice and to attend such an event as TWIF's guest. TWIF reserves the right to use any of the photo's entered and will acknowledge the photographer when it is used. Apart from the winning photo, a draw will also be made from the voters who will receive a mystery prize! So please enter your best photo's, and when the time comes, vote as much as you like.

WATCH THIS SPACE!

Note: You are welcome to also send in "funny" photo's, but no prize will be given, although they may be printed in future magazines.

Send entries (only as JPEG /electronic files either on CD or by e-mail) to:

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