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COACH PROFILE

NOLLIE STOFBERG South Africa

Nollie Stofberg is one of the most accomplished coaches in the South African tug-of-war history. His best achievement remains the winning of three silver and one bronze medal during the 2002 World Outdoor Championships in Pretoria and the qualification and participation of both women and men teams at the last 2 World Games.

Born and bred in a tug of war family in the renowned Goudini/Breede River area in the Western Cape, it was inevitable that he was to follow in his dad - Henry Stofberg's - steps. Henry represented South Africa in 1973 in Switzerland where his 720 team won the bronze medal. Nollie always had the goal to go one up on his dad, hence the silver medals in Pretoria in 2002. And he is not stopping - he wants more and has continued to invest a lot of his private time in preparing teams for future successes.

Nollie is a partner in an independent brokerage business in the financial services sector. Their core business is short term insurance, life insurance, medical cover, fixed investments, unit trusts and estate planning. They service approximately 2,000 clients from their base in the Western Cape.

He is married to Estelle, herself a puller in the silver medal 560 ladies team in Pretoria in 2002. They have two sons, Hendriko (11) and Driiaan (9). Both of them have also started to follow in dad and granddad's footsteps with participation in the SA youth leagues. The family lives in Worcester, about 100 kilometers from Cape Town.

His philosophy in life, be that in sport, work or pleasure, is that you will achieve what you believe. "All that a man achieves, or fails to achieve is the direct result of his thoughts. Thinking will make or break you, so make a conscious decision to think things that will add value to yourself and others", is his motto.

Nollie participated from school level and represented the SA Schools in 1984. In 1986 he joined the SA Police Service and went on to represent a range of teams on national and international level - gaining colors from SA Police, SA Combined Services, Northern Transvaal (Gauteng today), SA Junior Springbok and Springbok on several occasions from 1986 to 1991.

In 1996 he started his coaching career with the well known Goudini Club where he succeeded in building a core of pullers who went on to become the backbone of the South African national team from 1998 until now. Some of the old hands have now retired and a renewed building phase has started. His vision is to ensure that South Africa will again be on the rostrum at the 2010 Championships - an event once again scheduled for South Africa.

He believes that to achieve continued success internationally, more of the experienced pullers must get involved with schools and colleges. "We have to build from the bottom up and we must find a way to ensure that participants at youth level proceed through to senior level."

His view is therefore that the national teams can only be strong if the clubs are strong. In his book, the strategy must therefore be to expose club teams to enough good competition to ensure that combinations can be tested under extreme conditions at various levels.

He also thinks that it would be a good thing if strong international teams could tour South Africa every two years (in the non-World Championship years) to expose the youth, U23 and senior Men and Women's teams to strong competition and to act as motivation for long term participation.

He issues an open invitation to international teams: "Pay your travelling cost to and from South Africa and we will take care of the rest."

Knowing the South African hospitality, that could well be the treat of a lifetime!



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Helping the tug of war sport to develop



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From the President's Desk . . .

I suddenly realize that this will be one of my last columns. In October I announced that I would not be available for another term of office after Congress 2007. The travel and scope of the work as TWIF Executive President has dreadfully expanded over recent years, resulting in a workload that left little or no time for family life. After more than 30 years involvement in the tug of war sport, I concluded to spend more time with my family which includes a new grandson.

I will finalize the various projects which are currently on my desk, such as the software for TWIF, the ICT and media projects. I hope to continue in an honorary position representing TWIF internationally. You will still meet me and my wife at TWIF events, but then more relaxed, as visitors. I am particularly looking forward to the World Championships in 2010 when TWIF celebrates its 50th anniversary; a grand event that I certainly would not like to miss. In the last years the TWIF membership has increased considerably, but we need to accelerate entries of new members so that we may meet the requirements of international sports. With 35 affiliated members presently, the demand of 40 members for GAISF and 50 for ARISF is within reach. I hope to leave a legacy of a well organized



Co Koren, President TWIF

international sport federation, ready and prepared to comply with the standards of current international sport. I sincerely hope that TWIF will find a young and dynamic Executive President who, with your support, will lead TWIF to maintain its rightful place within GAISF, IOC and World Games and to regain its place on the Olympic programme.

Members of the tug of war family have changed over the years; teams from new countries are competing against sons and daughters of former champions, but it is still a family. It will take some years before my grandson may compete for any victory; in these years tug of war will have progressed further, but you will continue to enjoy it as I have done in all those years.

Traditionally I end this last column of the year with wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

CO KOREN President TWIF

The future - beyond 2006 . . .



In the previous magazine a full report of the TWIF seminar prior to Congress 2006 was provided on the topics of youth development, medical issues with regard to weigh-in and weight classes, and the rules of the sport. The second half of the seminar dealt with modernisation of the sport utilising technology linked to accreditation, competition and scoring systems. Mr Co Koren, President of TWIF, dealt with this topic.

TONY MARTIN PROVIDED THE REPORT

... hi-tech assists on many levels

It was explained how far we have progressed from hand written sheets and name tags being pulled out of containers to enable a draw to be made - to now, where details are entered into a computer, the random draw is done automatically and printed sheets issued. However, we need to progress further and to do this we need as much information of competitors as possible. This may also assist some pullers when they are trying to obtain a visa.



the only way forward is to use technology in the tug of war sport

Software - This was used for the first time in the 2006 World Indoor Championships in Killybegs, Ireland, and worked well. The old TWIF software had been in use for 10 years. Also at the last 3 events we have used an electronic scoreboard system. With indoor a multi-media beamer was used, and for outdoor a video wall. These programmes are ready to stand alone, but still need to be integrated.

Organisers - have to deal with the entry of clubs, accreditation and accommodation. For this a module has been created to assist the organisers prior to competitions.

During the competition - National teams are entered directly into the computer. The weigh-in is also part of this. From this input the draw is made, draw sheets printed, as well as the results entered for the printing of the competition result book. To assist with the presentation of pullers and coaches during finals, the names are easily available on print out for individual call out by the announcer, as well as for projection on the scoreboard.

The score is continually being updated on the screen. When the handwritten weigh sheets are handed in at the scales and it corresponds with the accreditation card, it is then entered into the score programme. The idea is to replace this system in the future with a barcode type system.

The draw is made from the input to the computer and produces a printed sheet, which also assist with the Doping Control. Copies are also given to the recorders, judges, marshals and team coaches.

TWIF uses the software suite Microsoft Office, which is used all over the world. The 3 sections used are:

- Access - the database section
- Excel - the spreadsheet section
- Power Point - the presentation section

For World Championships 2006 in the Netherlands, with help from an IT company, further progress has been made with a validation process (by the various international representatives) being built into the accreditation process. This enabled organisers to check the accuracy of the information required on all pullers and teams. Once captured, this information is transferred to the organisers, then on to the administration office and on to the officials running the championship.

For this Championships the collection of data was done by entry into the computer via an on-line entry form which produced an accreditation card. On-line forms were produced which can easily be adapted for the specific needs for events in various countries. It is also foreseen that puller passports will in future hold all the pullers details which will assist with the information required by WADA (World Anti Doping Agency) and may well assist with obtaining a visa.

It is envisaged that in future all recorders will use computers, but a paper backup system will still be required to cover all eventualities.

President Koren concluded by allaying fears from some members as to the real need for such "hi-tech" programmes and equipment to run championships. He assured members that this is the only way forward if the tug of war sports wishes to present itself for participants, spectators and the media on the same level as other sports do.

FAQS

WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF THE TUG OF WAR SPORT?

There is no specific time and place to pinpoint the origin of the sport. The contest of pulling on a rope however originates from ancient ceremonies and cults which are found all over the world. Ancient tug of war was performed in different styles, not always using a rope, but also wooden stakes or even "living chains" with participants clasping their arms around each others waists.

INSPECTION OF GROUNDS

At the moment 2 people from TWIF inspect the ground and facilities to ensure that they are adequate for outdoor and/or indoor competition. Guidelines have been compiled to assist in the preparation phase of fields for outdoor competition.

This has been included in the latest version of the Organisers Manual.



South Asian Games

The South Asian Games are held every two years. This year they were held in Sri Lanka from September 18th to 28th. Teams from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka competed.

This year tug of war was included as a demonstration sport and it was very successful. The demonstration was between the Sri Lanka National Team and a combined team from the seven other countries.

The photograph left shows the Honourable Minister for Youth Affairs and Sport being introduced to the combined team. The photograph right is of the Sri Lanka National team competing against the combined team. The Tug of War Federation of Sri Lanka appreciate and admire the assistance and encouragement that they receive from TWIF.

CONTRIBUTED BY ROSEMARY SMITH

KILLYLOUGH triumphant champions in Assen

Killylough Tug of War Club triumph again at the World Championships in Assen making a record that will be very hard for any other team to beat.

Killylough is a small club from the Republic of Ireland that was first formed in 1971. The team comprises mainly of lads who are involved in the construction and farming industries. They are based in the rural part of Ireland, Killylough being a townland in the small village of Tydavnet in the county of Monaghan. The team won their first national title in 1980 and since then they have won 52 national titles. Since 1986 they have represented their country every year at outdoor International Championships. This year they were beaten in both the finals of the 560 kilos and 600 kilos by Bremore. The team were very despondent as they had represented their country almost every year since 1986. But luck was on their side as for the first time the 600 kilo weight class was included in the World Championships and they were asked to represent at this weight.

In August they were invited to Northern Ireland to compete in the 640 open clubs competition at the United Kingdom Championships and they beat Boley in the final. Boley having just returned from Sweden where they were the 640 kilos winners in the friendly international. Killylough were triumphant and their confidence returned, now the gold medal at the World Championship was the next target in their sight.

The 600 kilo open clubs competition was held on the Thursday and 29 teams were competing. Killylough were in Group 3 which they won. Then they met Oxney Vines Cross in the semi-final and went on to beat the Veense Boys of the home country in the final for the coveted Gold Medal.



Three times lucky in the Netherlands. Can any other team worldwide beat this outstanding record!

CONTRIBUTED BY ROSEMARY SMITH

The next day was a day of rest for the lads before they represented their country on Saturday in the World Championships at 600 kilos. Nine countries entered this weight and the same team that competed in the Open competition represented Ireland again and they never lost a point in the first round.

They met Switzerland in the semi-final and went on to meet England in the final. The strong and determined men of Killylough did their country proud winning the Gold Medal for their country beating another team that have a lot of history in the sport of Tug of War, Oxney Vines Cross.

Although since 1986 Killylough have won international medals nearly every year, this has been the clubs greatest achievement - winning two gold medals at a World Championships with the same lads competing in both competitions. The Netherlands certainly seems to be a lucky venue for them.

1986 Killylough, representing their country, won their first World Gold Championship Medal at 560 kilos in Slagharen, Netherlands. Five members of this team were in the winning team in Assen.

1996 Killylough won their second World Gold Medal in the Open Clubs Competition at 560 kilos again in Slagharen, Netherlands. Four members of this team were in the winning team in Assen.

2006 Killylough win the 600 kilo Gold Medal at the Open Clubs competition and representing their country win the 600 kilo Championship at Assen in the Netherlands.