INTERNATIONAL BOWLING FEDERATION

OPEN LETTER FROM THE C.E.O. OF THE INTERNATIONAL BOWLING FEDERATION

Lausanne, Switzerland
November 2nd, 2020

Dear All,

With the global COVID-19 pandemic, we are all living with much uncertainty and now, this uncertainty is far from subsiding.

We are all beginning to fully understand the far-reaching consequences of the coronavirus crisis around the world.

Even if the circumstances may appear challenging and difficult right now, bowling remains strong. We have great opportunities we never fully captured.

If we change perspective, we can shape our future to even strengthen the relevance of bowling in the world.

Our sport has a vast history though now it is time for a rebirth that leverages the key learnings from the past in forming a new history.

As the governing body World Bowling has been an associate member of its own organisation instead of acting as the international bowling federation. This is about to change.

Following an Extra Ordinary Congress held in Lausanne, Switzerland, November 2nd, 2020, the name of the association was changed from **World Bowling** (WB) to the **International Bowling Federation** (IBF). The official headquarters of the IBF will continue to be based in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Ours is not merely a change in name but a change in the way the International Bowling Federation will fulfil its mission and interact with all stakeholders.

Comprised of 114 Member Federations across five Continental Zones with an athlete registration of c2million the purpose of IBF is to encourage the international development of the sport of Tenpin, Ninepin and Para Bowling (Bowling) as a sport of international standing and recognition. We will promote bowling as a sport for Olympic and Paralympic status.

We will protect our World Championships and World level events to drive aspiration and respect for our athletes. We are the international federation for the sport of bowling and as such the only organization entitled to use “World” in the name of events. World level events are the pinnacle for our athletes from our membership and a showcase to the world of their skill and commitment.

We will encourage and support measures among our competitions and members (and their athletes) that safeguard the integrity of bowling and protect clean athletes through the fight against doping and the prevention of the manipulation of competitions. We will encourage and support measures related to the medical care and health of the athletes that participate in all competitions.

We will secure the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms of everyone without discrimination of any kind, such as age, race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, disability, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

We will lead by example with our governance, compliance and administration.

Historically many decisions were made, not at international level but at national level. This was a failing on behalf of the international governing body. With the renewed ambition of positioning bowling in the world's biggest multi-sport games it is imperative for the international body to have ownership and be accountable across all areas. We will hold ourselves accountable to protect the values and mission of our sport and our athletes by creating clear pathways for progression from entry to elite and on to masters.

We will represent bowling and will fulfil the mission and role of an international federation within the Olympic Movement and within the Paralympic Movement. We will work diligently and tirelessly and will elevate our standards, with the intention of being part of the Olympic Games, and Paralympic Games. IBF will thereby establish and enforce, in accordance with the Olympic Charter and International Paralympic Committee handbook the rules concerning the playing of bowling.

Numerous failed Olympic bids, the most recent, Tokyo2020 and Paris2024 but many before, have never brought about the necessary sole searching and deep dive into why the sport was rejected. It was never concluded that maybe we were doing this all wrong, only that rejection was the fault of someone else.

A bid for the inclusion of bowling in the Olympics is not just a presentation of what we will do. It requires us to build a business that is enhanced by inclusion. A strong international federation with ownership of its elite events can create the choices for the next generation of bowlers. We should not seek approval or acknowledgement that bowling is a sport. Bowling ***is*** a sport and we have incredible athletes who prove it with sacrifice, commitment and hard work. We should be supporting those athletes and place them on a global stage.

Sport bowling has a long history, yet that history often stands in its way. I have heard for the past year from many that the sport would have changed if included in the Olympic games. This is a flawed vision. ***We*** must change to reflect the scale of bowling and the true global representation of the sport. Evidence, fact not fiction. An Olympic bid should not be a rescue strategy for a sport. An Olympic bid should be an enhancement of a vision for success that is shared from proprietors to administrators to athletes and volunteers.

We will in the future, also consider the needs of proprietors in our decision-making process.

Sport bowling has in the past ignored the fact that it is bowling center operators that take the financial risk by investing in the business that allows the sport to be played. It is therefore not surprising that some bowling center operators did little or nothing to encourage competitive play in their centers or would listen to suggestions from an organisation, perceived to be ineffective, even though it could enhance their business. We rely totally on those that invest in the appropriate infrastructure for the practice of bowling. We must listen, engage, embrace and support them and make everyone part of the journey. Rules and regulations must compliment the foundation of the sport to allow proprietors, globally, to drive an increase in participation and footfall through their centers.

As you may know, we signed with the United Nations Sport for Climate Action Framework initiative. To honour our commitment, we will work on a sustainable certification programme to allow for further innovations and opportunities across the industry. We will support those proprietors who have chosen to move forward with technology that allows for a more economically and environmentally sustainable business. I applaud those national federations that recognised a changing world, who embraced and approved string centers for sport bowling.

As an international federation we will be adopting the same approach. We aim to provide those bowling center operators with a platform to showcase their centers globally and to support any federation around the world that allows the use of string machines for sport bowling.

Finally, we will work to leverage bowling's vast technology platform.

Many sports are completely stranded in their inability to bring about competition via a virtual though physical means. But in bowling the volume of technology and infrastructure that exists today enables a fully integrity-based competition format through API connectivity, bringing people together globally whilst reducing the risk of hundreds of bowlers travelling to one location and housed in a bowling center. This leverages the global connectivity of the sport.

Now is not the time to sit back and hope things will get better. Actions of course speak louder than words.

Now it is time for a rebirth that leverages the key learnings from the past in forming a new history.

We need to act together and lead by example to elevate bowling to a world class and an internationally recognized sport.

My team and I look forward to working with all bowling federations, industry stakeholders and our partners to achieve this goal.

Regards,



Andrew Oram