

## **MINUTES OF THE GAISF GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2007 – IDBF MEMBERSHIP**

### **AGENDA ITEM 15: NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS**

#### **15.2 Candidate to Member Status**

##### **c) IDBF - International Dragon Boat Federation**

The last application was from the International Dragon Boat Federation. Since this was the third year running that the IDBF candidature was being proposed to the General Assembly, the Council had decided that there was no need for another presentation of the sport since by now everybody was familiar with it. As the International Canoe Federation (ICF) objected to the application, the ICF would take the floor for 3 minutes to state its objections and then the IDBF would be granted 3 minutes to reply.

Mr Goetschy, Secretary General of the ICF, reminded the members that the objection had already been made clear at the last two General Assemblies, as could be read in the minutes of those meetings, and also in a letter sent by the ICF to all the GAISF members just a few weeks before the present Assembly.

Mr Goetschy informed the delegates that communication had been restored with the IDBF after the 2006 General Assembly, but that although personal relations were much improved, an agreement had not been reached.

The ICF considered that there was still conflict and rivalry between the two organisations. The ICF was sceptical about the authenticity of the list of IDBF members recognised by the highest sports authority or NOC in several countries.

Also, in 1999, GAISF had been informed that dragon boating was one of the disciplines controlled by the ICF and consequently the ICF believed that the ICF was the GAISF member which organised dragon boat worldwide, even if it were not the only organisation to do so.

According to its statutes, the ICF was a multisport organisation consisting of all canoeing and paddling activities - and dragon boating was a paddling activity. Mr Goetschy also emphasised that within the ICF, dragon boating benefited from a network of 140 ICF members and 5 continental associations.

In conclusion, Mr Goetschy highlighted the fact that another GAISF member federation could easily experience the same kind of situation that the ICF was currently facing with regard to the IDBF. On the basis of the ICF objection, he therefore requested that the General Assembly reject the application from the IDBF.

Following this objection, Wei Jizhong, Honorary Secretary General of the Chinese Olympic Committee, took the floor to defend the IDBF application.

Mr Wei firstly underlined the fact that dragon boating had its origins in China and that it had over 2,000 years of history. Secondly, the IDBF had been established in 1991, which was prior to the creation of any dragon boat committee within the ICF. Hence dragon boat was not separating from canoeing, since the two sports had never been together.

The IDBF repeated its willingness to co-operate with the ICF and hoped that under the umbrella of GAISF, it would be possible to work together, but as two separate International Federations.

The IDBF delegation was then requested to leave the room. The President asked whether there were any questions.

**Mr Espinos Ortueta, President of the WKF (Karate), wished to know whether, if the IDBF were accepted as a GAISF member, the ICF would be obliged to remove any reference to dragon boat in its statutes.**

**The President replied that IDBF membership would not automatically mean that the ICF would have to cease its dragon boat activities.** This was a difficult issue, and one that also concerned other federations in a similar situation, particularly within the martial arts.

Mr Dapeng, Vice-President of the IAAF (Athletics), supported the view that sports linked with tradition and culture, such as dragon boating, should be preserved and developed.

As long as the IDBF fulfilled the conditions and criteria requested for membership, he felt that it would be more in the interest of the sport to be governed by this specific body, which would be more focussed on the dragon boat sport. He believed that in the future, there would need to be shared responsibility between the ICF and the IDBF for promoting the sport in such a way that each would benefit from the efforts of the other.

Mr van Campenhout, Treasurer of the IWUF (Wushu) agreed with the importance of cultural heritage in sport.

**Ms van Breda Vriesman, President of the FIH (Hockey), asked whether the GAISF Council took a stance when there was an objection to a new application.**

The President explained that when the Council submitted a new application to the General Assembly, this automatically meant that the Council recommended the General Assembly to accept it.

Mr Portmann, President of the FAI (Air Sports), requested to know what arguments the Council had to offer for the acceptance of the IDBF since its having been rejected in Seoul the previous year.

**The President explained that the Council's role was to decide whether the candidate sport was a different and separate sport from one already controlled by a member federation or whether it was a discipline of the latter.**

**In the case of dragon boating, the Council had come to the conclusion, already several years before, that this deserved to be considered and proposed as a different sport. The General Assembly, which had the ultimate power of decision, had not agreed with the Council in 2005 and 2006, but it was now up to the General Assembly to vote again on this application.**

Mr Fransoo, President of the IKF (Korfball), proposed that the delegates should take the Council's word and advice very seriously.

A question was raised from the floor concerning the fact that a candidate could apply several years running.

The President informed the Assembly that this issue would be discussed at the next Council meeting and that a recommendation would no doubt be made at the next General Assembly as to the number of years a rejected candidate would have to wait before re-applying for GAISF membership. However, since there was currently nothing in the statutes on this subject, the IDBF was eligible to reapply.

The vote was then taken, with the result of 38 in favour, 33 against and 2 abstentions. The International Dragon Boat Federation was consequently accepted as a member of GAISF.