



INTERNATIONAL TABLE TENNIS COMMITTEE FOR DISABLED
A Standing Committee of the International Paralympic Committee

ANNUAL REPORT: 2001/2

Introduction: 2001 proved to be an extremely active year for the ITTC not only organising a full tournament calendar but also on the election front. Whoever believes that the year after the Paralympic Games is a quiet “recovery” year must be dreaming! 2002 has proved to be just as busy as we all prepare for the highlight of the year, the World Championships.

New officers: following the elections in Sydney, several portfolios were filled by “members at large”. In addition, a new Secretary General was co-opted on to the ITTC and new regional representatives were elected, as agreed at the Table Tennis Assembly in Sydney, during the regional championships. The full committee at present is:

Chairperson	Christian Lillieroos (USA)
Vice-Chairperson	Øivind Eriksen (NOR)
Secretary General	Alison Burchell (RSA)
Treasurer	Silas Chiang (Hong Kong)
Medical Officer	Dr Aart Kruimer (NED)
Technical Officer	Raúl Calín (ESP)
Selection Officer	Nico Verspeelt (BEL)
Athletes’ Representative)	Vincent Boury (FRA)
Development Officer)	
Tournament Officer)	Jiri Danek (CZE)
Europe)	
Americas	Leandro Olvech (ARG)
FESPIC	Hong-Jae Lee (KOR)

We have also established subcommittees for the portfolios of medical (including classification and doping control), technical, development, selections and tournaments with a range of volunteers with particular expertise in their areas.

The regional representative for the Africa-Middle East region has yet to be elected and we hope that this issue will be resolved at a meeting for countries in that region to be held during the World Championships.

Meetings: of the ITTC SAEC were held in Bonn in January, in Frankfurt in July 2001 and in Roermond in January 2002.

Tournaments: are probably the main focus of our operations at present. The dynamic calendar in 2001 included:

- ✓ 3 regional tournaments (factor 50) in FESPIC, Europe and Americas with regional assemblies. The African-Middle East Championships had to be cancelled due to the events following the tragic events of 11 September 2001.
- ✓ 20 championships in 3 regions (excluding Africa): 4 with factor 10 and 16 with factor 20.

Further than that, preparations for the world championships being hosted by Chinese Taipei began in earnest during the year with visits in 2001 and 2002 by the appointed technical delegate, deputy TD and chairperson as well as preparations for a new event: the World Team Cup to be played in Roermond, Netherlands in early July 2002. This event is essentially an invitation event with a ranking factor of 40. We hope that this will soon develop into one of the most prestigious events on our calendar.

Other work has been done in conjunction with the organising committee for the Commonwealth Games to be held in Manchester, UK in July 2002 in order to get the numbers of entries for the open women's singles sitting event up. With the benefit of hindsight, this was probably not the best event to use to showcase table tennis and we hope that discussions about the events for Melbourne 2006 will be held with an open mind.

Development: during 2001, the following courses were held:

- 2 seminars for technical delegates so that 6 new TDs have qualified. We have also developed a certification system for TDs to reflect their level of experience.

- 5 umpires seminars as a result of which 18 people qualified with 1 qualifying as a national umpire. A report from the final seminar is awaited.
- 4 classification seminars with 22 level A (trainee), 12 level B (national) and 2 level C (regional) classifiers qualifying. Four level D (international) classifiers were also qualified.
- 1 coaching course at level 2 from which 48 people qualified from 63 attendees.

Training material is being developed for TDs and coaches. Materials already exist for classifiers and umpires courses.

The regional representatives will play a particularly important role in the development of the sport in their particular region. We hope that links between the regional table tennis representatives and the continental NPC organisations will be strengthened. The focus of work, besides spreading the game, will be the increased participation of the more severely disabled and women in line with the IPC direction. A distinction between development at entry and at the élite levels still needs to be devised to make this portfolio manageable!

The Americas Table Tennis Committee (ATTC) has been recognised as a regional organisation by the ITTC with an executive committee. The FESPIC Table Tennis Committee (FTTC) will hopefully be structured in a similar way to the ATTC after the FESPIC Games. Europe and the African-Middle East regions will hopefully follow suit.

Classification: the 11 classes currently in use (TT1 – 5 sitting classes, TT 6 – 10 standing classes, TT11 intellectually disabled) are being reviewed with recommendations going to the Table Tennis Assembly during the world championships to reduce the sitting classes from 5 to 4. Adaptations for the standing classes are also being considered to develop a more “gliding scale”.

The number of players whose classification was checked during 2001 is 1 935. In addition, 387 new classifications were done during the period with 4 new nations taking up the sport.

Following a meeting of the chief classifiers in each of the IPC sports held in early February 2002, we have co-opted a representative from INAS-FID onto our medical committee. This, we believe, will enable us to address the issue of a workable classification system for TT11 players which will, in

essence, be different from the functional classification system used for players with physical disabilities.

Review of the table tennis handbook: has been completed with the latest version being on the website. With further changes being recommended for the approval of the Table Tennis Assembly in August 2002, it will only be distributed in hard copy in the second half of 2002 and updated thereafter every 2 years. New additions cover requirements for organising committees of regional, world and Paralympic championships to implement doping and racket control and other requirements about the appointment of classifiers, TDs, referees and umpires.

Selections: the formula developed in the previous Paralympic cycle seems to have been successful and has been used again for the world championships. 30% of the players are selected from the regional championships, 60% are selected on the basis of world rankings and 10% is reserved by the ITTC for wild cards and team target players. The ranking list used was that in effect on 1 December 2001. Special arrangements were made for players from the Africa-Middle East region following the cancellation of that event to ensure that none was unduly compromised.

Athletes' representation: has taken on a new dimension with the development of athlete profiles linked to our website. The profiles present the "human side" of the players. Through an inclusive system of nominations and elections, the athletes themselves voted Christophe Durand (France) as the "ITTC Player of 2001". We hope to recognise Christophe during our world championships. The next step is to develop a "wall of fame" recognising players of the year, players of various tournaments and countries, past exceptional players and other people who have contributed to the sport although they may not necessarily be players themselves.

In addition, we have ensured that the top 5 players were submitted to the IPC for consideration for the Laureus Award – the sports equivalent of the Oscars. Unfortunately our nominations were not submitted to the Laureus Foundation for the final round but we hope that this will change in future. For information, the following may be of interest:

"The Laureus World Sports Awards were established in 1999 by Founding Patrons, DaimlerChrysler and Richemont, who are represented through their premier brands Mercedes-Benz and Cartier. The awards honor the achievements of the world's greatest sportsmen and women on an annual basis, and

also contribute to social change through the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation. The Foundation is financed by the Founding Patrons, with Deutsche Bank Private Banking acting as its Trusted Private Bank.”

The nominees are:

Heidi Andreasen (Faroe Islands) – swimming

Earle Connors (Canada) – athletics

Gerd Schönfelder (Germany) - Alpine skiing

Beat Schwarzenbach (Switzerland) – cycling

Esther Vergeer (The Netherlands) - wheelchair tennis

Website: as a result of several problems with our website, the ITTC has taken a decision to register a new website name and domain. These new arrangements have come into operation during February 2002 and the address is <http://www.ipttc.org>.

Finance: the year seems to have been taken up with endless discussions to ensure that the ITTC falls in line with the IPC and the requirements of German law. Following constructive discussions with the IPC Sports and Finance Departments, we have established new processes which, we believe, will not increase the bureaucratic process but ease the burden on our Treasurer and ensure that we are covered from a legal perspective as the ITTC does not have a legal persona of its own. Indeed, we need to be clear that we are a standing committee of the IPC – at least until the relationship with the ITTF is finalized.

Also of some concern is the small budget allocated to our sport by the IPC. It is our contention that with the number of players and the level of activity (see above), table tennis should have been allocated more than US\$15 000,00.

Other sources of income are the sanction and capitation fees for factor 10 to 40 tournaments which go to the ITTC and for capitation fees for factor 50 tournaments, the division is equal between IPC, ITTC and the relevant IPC regional committee and for factor 80 tournaments, the division is between IPC, ITTC and the IPC Development Fund. A recommendation will be submitted to the Sports Council that the amounts allocated to the IPC regions and IPC Development Fund should be used to promote the sport which generates the income – in our case, to table tennis.

Relations with the International Table Tennis Federation: as a result of the Sports Council meeting in Athens in December 2001, we have made formal contact with the ITTF about cooperation. The approach was received positively and a resolution requesting “conceptual approval” from the Table Tennis Assembly in August 2002 for continued discussions and cooperation in the areas of technical, development and publications will be discussed. A working group covering these areas has been set up under the leadership of our Vice-Chairperson. The ITTF President will be invited to our world championships and will hopefully attend either in person or by sending a representative. In reality, many of the umpires and referees at our tournaments are ITTF personnel and many players participate in the able-bodied leagues in several countries so the move of formalising this relationship seems to make sense – subject to the approval of the Assembly.

Sports Council working group: in order to address the number of different issues discussed at these meetings and to ensure continuity of representation, we have established a “working group” of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary General.

Thanks: are sincerely expressed to all the thousands of volunteers who work to make the sport a success for athletes with a disability. Without the able support of the IPC Executive and Headquarters staff, this would not have been possible. I would also like to extend a special thank you to our new Secretary General, Alison Burchell, who is a god-send with her administrative skills and, being the only native English speaker on the Executive Committee, she is invaluable. Finally, thanks also need to be expressed to the ITTC SAEC members for their continued invaluable contribution to the sport and, most definitely, to those working for table tennis in the 91 countries widely practicing the sport world-wide and the players.

CHRISTIAN LILLIEROOS

Chairperson for ITTC

(unsigned as sent by email)

CL/amb

16 April 2002