

# **PARALYMPIC GAMES “ATHENS 2004”**

## **Report from the Referees**

September 15 to Sep 28, 2004  
Galatsi Sports Hall, Athens

The Athens 2004 Paralympic Games was one of the most successful Games of all time. The presentation, the efficiency of the Organisers, the management of the competitions, the entire supporting functions are well appreciated.

The Referees felt honoured and privileged to be a part of this most prestigious event. On behalf of all the Referees and Umpires, we would like to congratulate the Organisers for the tremendous success, and thank all those who have given us excellent support and cooperation.

We enjoyed the hospitality, friendship and collaboration of our Greek colleagues. We also benefited from this Paralympic experience, which will be a good memory for us all.

Special thanks must go to Georgios Seliniotakis and the entire team of Workforce and the Organisers, whose teamwork, and commitment to excellence is highly admired. “EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE” is the philosophy and attitude we experienced from the Athens 2004 Paralympic Games. With the tireless dedication to their jobs, the entire machinery of the Organisers and the Workforce made everything possible for all to move forward towards the most successful Paralympic Games ever.

We would also like to thank the TDs, Oeivind Eriksen and Nico Verspeelt, IPTTC Chairperson and Officials, and fellow umpires from all over the world and Greece, who have given us all the support, trust and cooperation during the Games. Special thank goes to Raul Calin, the Umpire Controller and Technical Officer of the IPTTC for his support and guidance before and during the games.

As we conclude our duties, we would like to submit our report on the observations during Athens 2004, and to make some recommendations for the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games. With our concerted efforts, we trust that Table Tennis will continue to be one of the most successful sports in the Paralympic movement.

## Observations and Recommendations

### 1. Arrival of Referees

The referees should report to duty at least four days before competition begins to ensure that sufficient time for the following:

- To meet the organisers, TDs and other officials of the Games
- To understand the progress and presentation of the competitions
- To check and confirm the entries
- To check the eligibility of players for each event
- To prepare for the Draws
- To familiarize with the venue and equipment
- To agree among themselves the responsibilities during different stages of the events
- To prepare for the officials briefing
- To prepare the umpires schedules for the first two days

### 2. Number of Referees

There should be one Referee and at least four Deputy Referees.

The team of Referees should work in shifts among themselves and take short breaks during the day as far as possible.

Their specific responsibilities during competition are:

- Preparing and conducting the Draws for the Second Stage competitions
- Preparing umpires schedules for each successive day
- Observing and supervising competitions and umpires on the field of play
- Manage the Rules 61 procedures and control of pre-match activities
- Checking all results and work with the Results operations

### 3. Umpires

- More umpires are required to allow reasonable working hours and break time
- Umpires should be three to a team: two on court and one to prepare for the next match in the Rule 61 Area and pre-match activities
- There should be at least two Reserve Umpires for every shift, and they should be positioned near the Referee's Table for prompt appointments
- Therefore total number of umpires should be:  
(3 Umpires x No. of Tables + 2 Reserves) x 2 Shifts per day – that would be 76 umpires for 12 active tables
- Umpire scheduling should also provide international exchange experiences and opportunity for rotation of wheelchair and standing play
- The mix of foreign to domestic umpires should be 50/50 with 38 foreign International umpires and 38 Domestic Umpires for 12 active tables
- The percentage of domestic international umpires should be 65% (about 24 IUs) and 35% domestic national umpires (about 14) for 12 active tables.
- All foreign International Umpires as well as all domestic International Umpires MUST be able to understand and communicate in English. Umpires do not have to be fluent in the language, but simply understand the Referee verbal and written instructions without translation as well as be able to communicate with the Referee, their fellow Assistant Umpires as well as the players in an understandable manner
- National Umpires with limited language skills must be teamed up with domestic International umpires with appropriate language skills

#### **4. Uniform for Technical Officials**

For the best presentation of the Games, uniform for Technical Officials should be provided according to the measurements as submitted prior to the event.

Access to onsite uniform adjustment for proper fitting is critical to the overall presentation of the Games and the comfort of technical officials.

The uniform for ITOs must include more than 2 dress shirts. Considering the long hours on duty in the first few days, there is no time to wash, dry and iron a dress shirt before having to report to duty the following day.

#### **5. Electronic Score Machines**

The Umpire and the Assistant Umpire should focus on the match and their on-field routines instead of having to manipulate the electronic scoring machines. An extra non-umpire Scorer outside of the court controlling the electronic score machine is necessary.

The electronic scoreboard should be near the match table instead of far behind the field of play. There should be two electronic score machines for each table so that the score can be visible to spectators and media from any position in the stands.

A presentable way to display team tie results must be considered in the planning and layout of results indicators.

#### **6. Technical Officials Guide**

All Technical Officials, including Referees and Umpires, should be provided with the Technical Officials Guide before they arrive at the Games. This will help them to know what to expect and be better prepared for the Games.

Such information could be communicated through e-mail attachment in PDF format and/or sent to them through their home Associations.

#### **7. Technical Officials and Umpires Briefing**

Before the start of the event, the Referee should conduct a four-hour course – mandatory for all foreign and domestic umpires – on the similarities and differences between standing disabled and wheelchair rules.

In addition, the Technical Officials briefing should be at least 4 hours in order to go through all the details including

- Procedure matters and field of play conduct
- Application of Rules and Regulations: expectation and consistency
- Filling in score sheets and report forms

Another session for venue familiarization and dress rehearsal is necessary.

#### **8. Rule 61 and Pre-Match Preparation and Waiting Areas**

A very large space is required for the above areas when 12 tables are active and matches are being played back-to-back.

Good ventilation and adequate space for wheelchair maneuvering in the waiting area should be considered in the initial planning.

## **9. Roles of TDs and Referees**

IPTTC should clarify the roles and responsibilities of the TDs and Referees, especially during the Draws. According to the Rules, the Referee is responsible for the Draw. Therefore it is necessary for the Referee to have sufficient time to communicate with the TD, the Organisers and the other support staff, such as computer people, on the procedures and presentation of the Draw.

## **10. Selection of Referees and Umpires**

- In order to maintain continuity of good practice and to avoid repetition of errors, one (or two) of the Referees should be appointed to the following Paralympic Games as soon as possible.
- Quality of umpires for the Paralympic Games should be of the highest standard, in terms of knowledge/experience in disabled table tennis officiating, as well as communication in English.
- Nomination (but not final selection) for Referees and Umpires targeted to work future Paralympic competitions should be concluded 18 to 24 months before the start of the Paralympics.
- International Technical Officials nominated to work future Paralympic events should participate in regional and international competitions. The Referees of these Championships should observe and recommend to the IPTTC Technical Officer on the basis of performance of the umpires, so that only the best umpires are selected and quality of umpires at the Paralympic Games guaranteed.
- A Test Event involving the targeted Referees and Technical Officials prior to the Games is necessary.

## **11. Disqualified players**

Karabec from CZE and Kam Shing Kwong from HKG were disqualified in the singles events, because they had too much prohibited solvents on their rackets. The control was made after the match instead of before the match for Quarter-Finals onwards.

For the team event, in accordance to the guidelines and collaboration with TD and racket controller, controls were conducted before matches.

## **12. No participation due to illness or injury**

From RSA in team event W4-5 Rosabelle Riese

From GBR in team event W 1-3 Lyne Riding

## **13. Number of Matches and Tables**

There were too many matches and tables used. The number of players and groups should be reduced in the first stage for better quality of competitions. For the first stage, suggest using eight tables, and for the finals stages, no more than four tables should be used.

For all semi finals and finals – One (or two) tables should be used.

## **14. Duration of Competitions**

The competitions dragged on too long. Instead of playing Groups and Knock-out competitions in two stages, the Single Knock-out format as for the Olympic Games could be considered. (Proposition from Cindy and Maria), or 2 stages with only the winner of each group in the second stage (Patrick). The IPTTC technical committee should make recommendations on how to improve the playing system to the IPTTC who would then present it for a vote by the member associations at the next congress (Aly).

More sessions could be played in a day.

The presentation of players and officials by the Workforce was very good, and the sessions could start despite some longer matches were still on. With three umpires in a team, there should be enough time for preparation of the next match.

**15. The conduct of the draw**

A separate room with easy access (and close proximity) to the playing venue be designated for conducting all draws. A time schedule should be posted on the door (and provided to all team leaders) for the target time of each draw. Those that wish to attend may do so without further notice.

The Jury should be present – or close at hand – during and immediately after each draw in case there is an appeal on the legality or conduct of the draw by a player or a team.

**16. Transportation of ITO**

ITOs and with special emphasis to referees, should have the equivalent of T3 transportation (on demand with 6 hour advance notice) since they work very long hours and have to be on duty long before and long after matches begin and end.

Report submitted by:

RINGEL, Patrick (FRA) – Referee

TSIPOU, Maria (GRE) – Referee

LEUNG, Cindy (HKG) - Deputy Referee

SALAM, Aly (USA) – Deputy Referee

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