

INTERNATIONAL TABLE TENNIS COMMITTEE
FOR THE DISABLED



TECHNICAL DELEGATE

EVALUATION REPORT

Name of Tournament / Championships: Mexico Open at Ecatepec 2003

Ranking Factor Applied for : 20

Name of Responsible Federation: Mexico Wheelchair Sports Federation

Name of Organising Committee Chairman: Jose Luis Vivanco

Dates of Play: July 23 – 27, 2003

Name of Technical Delegate: Christian Lillieroos, USA

Report submitted to IPC and ITTC: July 28, 2003

Accommodation: The tournament was for classes 1 – 10, so accessibility was important.

Hotel: The Tournament Hotels, Villas Las Palmas and Crown Victoria, were 2-3 star in quality. Villa Las Palmas was directly outside the Tournament venue, but was not accessible for wheelchairs. The rooms were reasonably accessible but the hotel made no ramps available. This was the original plan to use for the majority of the participants including meal services in their restaurant, but 3 days before the tournaments the Hotel refused to make adequate adjustments for accessibility. Therefore the organizers had to look for other solutions and Hotel Crown Victoria was contracted for all wheelchair users, and the majority of the participants. Crown Victoria was 15 minutes drive away from the hall with some traffic. The Hotels could not offer international phone service, which of course was a concern for all international delegations. Each room had a King size bed with the plan that each room should have 2 people in the bed, which was uncomfortable for most international delegations. The rooms were spacey so wheelchairs had no problems moving around. The bathrooms were accessible to wheelchair but the showers were not possible to access for class 1-3 athletes by themselves. Outside temperatures in Mexico are pretty constant at 20-25 C (68-77), but the rooms had no heating or air-conditioning so some times some sensitive athletes complained about that.

Food: The short time change was made so a dining hall was made in the venue with separating drapes, and a food service was contracted for all three meals. The meals were accommodating to different diets, like vegetarian, and with a daily variety of local food, of very good quality. Fast and highly tentative waiters served each meal. The food service in general was of very high level for a tournament at this level. It would have been better for the athletes to have breakfast at the Hotels to not force the athletes to go to the hall early each day independent of their playing schedule. Now the athletes had to stay in the hall from 7:30AM to 10:00PM with some few exceptions of the ones that were staying at Villa Las Palmas.

Venue: The hall was the Ecatepec Sports centre. It was 50m away from the Villa Las Palmas Hotel and 15-20 minutes drive away from Crown Victoria. It was a very large venue that could have easily served 20 standing competition stables. Extra lighting was installed for the event, and curtains to block out outside lighting was put in place. This was played on 10 competition tables and 3 warm-up tables. 8 tables were wheelchair accessible. The floor was industrially cleaned before the competition but it got dirty soon again. The tournament was conducted during a festival where sometimes during the tournament it was extremely loud music going on just outside the venue.

Floor: All the 13 tables had a stone floor as a base. The standing players had problems with the floor, where it was dirty and slippery from time to time. For disabled standing athletes with reduced or in some classes almost no muscle functions in the legs it is extremely hazardous for the joints to play on a hard floor. For the wheelchairs players the floor was very good.

Lighting: The intensity was acceptable at about 600 lux. with extra lights put in for the tournament. The second day one light burned out and as a consequence on one table the light was not good enough, and matches were scheduled to avoid that table as much as possible. Curtains adequately covered the windows, so the outside lights did not bother the athletes.

Airflow: No problems.

Spectator seats: It was about chairs for about 100 spectators around the 10 competition tables. It was room for more but it was not needed. Spectators came in different time periods and sometimes large school classes came in, but at that time the field of play staff did a good job to control the crowd.

Referee's table: A designated referee table was elevated on a stage with good view for the referees, right next to the results desk. A referee and deputy referee designated for the tournament.

Gluing room: No special location was designated, but it was a very large facility so it did not present itself as a problem.

Official's room: No officials lounge for the tournaments officials was organized, but an area close to the competition tables was assigned for the umpires.

Warm-up tables: 3 tables were allocated for this. The lighting was not of good quality so the athletes did not really use it much, but no complains came from the athletes.

Equipment: Tables: 13 Stiga Expert rollers made in USA, where 8 were wheelchair tables
blue ITTF and ITTC approved
Balls: Stiga *** ITTF, orange
Scorers: Stiga, black
Net/Post: Stiga, ITTF
Sorrounds : Stiga, blue

Competition days :

July 24 – 26: 2003 Playing days

July 23, 2003: arrival and classification day for participants. 23 classifications were made where 13 was from Mexico. Draw for the Open and Individual events were made in a public format at the Team leader meeting that night. At night was a professional wrestling tournament held in the same hall as the tournament.

July 24, 2003: Open singles, Men Wheelchair, Standing and Women Wheelchair. All events played in Single elimination format. Directly after the events were finished was an award presentation. At night started Individual events in Men Class 1-2, 3, 6-7, 8, Women class 2-4, and 5, with round robin groups of 3 or 4. At night was the draw for all the team events was conducted in a public format.

July 25, 2003: Individual events and in the afternoon started the team events. At night was the award presentation for 5 individual events.

July 26, 2003: The Team events were finished. The events finished at 5:00PM. At night was a closing ceremony with the remaining 4 individual events, and the 5-team events.

July 27, 2003: Day of Departure and some volunteer tourist trips to Mexican pyramids offered to the delegations.

Number of Participants: The IPC participation form was faxed to IPC HQ July 26.
Wheelchair + Standing 75 entered and 61 showed up.
Staff 7

Together for capitation taxes

68 x US\$20 = US\$1,360

13 nations entered and only 10 nations showed up. Only one standing female entry was received so the category had to be cancelled. The organizers decided to accept some entries with out the entry fee paid. Nigeria entered with out paying any entry fee and did not communicate with the organizing committee that they were not coming. To the contrary several communications existed to verify that they would be there. This meant that the organizers could not cancel the hotel rooms and meals services for the NGR delegation, and lost money on their entry.

“I recommend that IPTTC force the NGR Paralympic committee to pay the entry fee to the organizers in Mexico that they have an obligation to pay with their entry and would not allow NGR to participate in any more tournaments until that is paid. “

The other 2 entered delegations that did not take part informed the organizers that they would not be able to participate due to injuries or inability to get a visa, got a partial refund on their entry fees. The organizers promised to do the result report within 10 days. The organizers have experience filling it out from the Para-Pan American Games 1999. The organizer offered to pay the capitation tax directly to the TD, but the bank transfer to IPC HQ after the invoice arrived was advised. Mexico incurred a \$22 bank charge for every entry-fee wired for \$350. It was an issue to recuperate that from the delegations that were under the impression that they had already paid that. The delivering bank charges an amount for the transfer and the receiving bank in Mexico charges an amount as well.

Transport: Official transport from the Airport was arranged and it worked almost all of the time. The organizers had to work very hard to get the arrival information from some delegations, which are easily happened when many times the NPC’s are not organizing the travels for the athletes. The Mexico City airport is about a 45-minute drive away from the competition hall in Ecatepec. One delegation had an arrival from a national airport after they made a vacation stop before the tournament for a couple of days, and was lost because the organizers assumed that it was an international arrival. Mexico city airport is very big and it is a large distance in-between the terminals. They paid their own transportation but were later reimbursed by the organizer. The transportation from the Hotel Crown Victoria was working adequately, even if it was needed more transportations during the day so the athletes could have had the option to go to the hotel and rest. This solution only had 3 days of anticipated planning due to the breach of agreement of the hotel right next to the venue.

<u>Officials:</u>	Chief Classifiers: Dr. Rafael Martinez Cayere	Puerto Rico	Level A Med.
	Classifier: Dr. Norma Patino	Mexico	Level B Med.
	Referee: Sergio Blanco	Mexico	ITTF/IPTTC
	Deputy referee: Juan Carlos Martinez	Mexico	ITTF/IPTTC

It was some controversy over that Nadia from ARG, should have been the selected as the Technical classifier instead of Dr. Martinez from PUR. He was eventually selected to save money for the organizers, and a compromise was made to use 2 medical classifiers. The IPTTC regulations states that one technical classifier has to be used for 20 point tournaments and Nadia from ARG was selected by the IPTTC medical committee as the technical classifier. The organizers then wanted to have a classification seminar and then Dr. Martinez was invited as the 3rd classifier as the only one certified in the Americas to conduct seminars, but the organizer thought that he was already selected, and wanted not to have to pay for an expensive air ticket from ARG. The situation was in the end solved in a friendly way, but the lesson learned is to make sure the organizers are very clear over that the selection of the classifiers are made by IPTTC, not the organizers.

Umpires: 10 umpires were assigned per shift. The tournament had overall 20 umpires but sometimes all were used so 2 umpires were assigned to each court. ITTC rules states that in an ITTC 20 point sanctioned tournament each match needs to have one official. This was respected very well. All umpires were in uniform and well behaved and one time at the tables all the time. Some of the umpires were young and little inexperienced but overall the umpire services were

done very well, especially for a 20-point tournament. The umpires were well trained in IPTTC rules on a national level.

Meeting: On the arrival day a meeting with the team leaders was conducted and the draw for the open event and individual events. The first plan for the meeting location was changed due to that the elevator in that place broke. The 2nd solution was to do it at the competition hall but that was very noisy due to the professional wrestling tournament that was going on at the same time. Most of the delegations did not stay to see the draw because it was too late. They got information directly when they arrived at what time the different events would start.

EDP: The classification seminar was cancelled due to reasons earlier explained.

Classification: 23 players were scheduled to be classified, where 13 were from Mexico. One Mexican player now classified in class 10 was before in the old standing system considered to not have minimal disability. Some class 5 players who could stand up, was informed that they could be forced to play in standing after 2004 if motions currently in process would pass in the assembly. 1 player decided to start to play standing and was classified as 8. Some comments from players in regards to the new standing system was that in general the system is good, but better definitions on the border line players was needed. All players asked about minimum disability for class 10 agreed that the current minimum disability level was set too high, and the players who now is in class 10 that before was class 9 feel that they can not physically keep up with the 1/3 non playing arm amputees and they think that the minimum level should be lowered because they have no limitations in able-bodied tournaments.

Results: Three experienced good computer operations staff was working exclusively for the events with one computer and a printer. In addition a laptop and jet printer was used for general information flyers and the ITTC results reports. The Sport information desk delivered information to the nations in appropriate files. The information was slow due to a low quality printer and that a copy-machine was not available in the hall. The sport information staff had to go to another building 2 blocks away to make copies. The participating countries got the complete result book during the closing presentation on Saturday night in a very creative way on a CD in a power-point format. The IPTTC Results form was promised to finish 10 days after the tournament. The Results form and the Result book CD will be sent to IPC and IPTTC Headquarters and to the IPTTC ranking officer Gael Marziou.

Other staff: Spanish and English were the official languages and some interpretations were offered in French and Japanese as well. The organizers provided with a high number of ball persons for every session. In every session about 10 ball persons were provided. The Sport information was good and the system with a file for each nation worked well the only issue was delays due to the lack of a close by copy machine.

Any other matter:

Protocol: The opening ceremony was in the same standard with a World Championships. Several high level officials attended the ceremony. The President of municipality of Ecatepec supported the tournament, and I had a visit with him and he was very appreciative of IPTTC hosting an international tournament in Ecatepec. On the last day of the tournament was a closing ceremony that was also very nice with nice awards ceremonies, and mariachis playing Mexican traditional music and the competition hall were now used as a dining hall.

The General director for the tournament was also tournament director for the 1999 Para Panam Games and showed experience and did an excellent job and handled all sensitive issues very

professionally and was very diplomatic. The Technical director was very precise in all time schedule issues and draws and the matches were on time the whole tournament. The computer operations staffs did a good job, and were efficient. No flags of the countries were hanged up in the playing area. That would be nice to add if the resources were there.

The **Medals ceremonies** were organized at three different times. The presentations were done with out flags and national anthems, but it was still done in a nice way. The awards medals were very nice and appreciated, and made especially for the tournament.

Drinks or refreshments were made available to the athletes and spectators during the competition thru a sponsor.

A special Medical service was organized with an ambulance service just outside the competition venue. It was heavily used for especially Andre Scott from USA, who had severe respiratory problems and was given oxygen frequently during the tournament, and was eventually admitted to a hospital, where he had to stay 4 days after the tournament.

Finals evaluations – it was the second IPTTC tournament for the Organizing committee and it was good organized. The situation with the unexpected change in the Hotel arrangement put severe stress on the organizer. I was very happy with the outcome. All matches were played on their scheduled time with umpires, which is the most important service for the athletes. The main issues were non paid entries that did not show up. Especially Nigeria's entry with no information that they would not show up needs to be dealt with on an international level so the policies in terms of a no show entry is determined.

Recommendation for next year.

1) Taraflex floored Table Tennis courts

Plan to give a special floor to the standing courts, maybe a Tara flex. If possible give 4 Tara flex floored tables for the standing events.

2) Have a podium for the award presentations and create special area. Put a drape in the background with the sponsor's logos visible for pictures, with an award podium. An awards table can be put right next to the podium for the presenters to put the medals. All the other arrangements that were done this year would be enough.

3) The breakfast should be arranged to have in the hotels.

All the athletes should not have to wake up early, no matter their playing schedule.

4) The sport information center has to have a copy machine close by.

It is very important for the delegations to have speedy information. The playing hall has to have a copy machine to speed up the information going out to the delegations, it is not acceptable to have to go 2 blocks to make copies.

Overall it was a good ITTC tournament Ranking Factor 20. With the above adjustments it will be even better. The experience from 1999 helped the organizers that now did their second international tournament.

Christian Lillieroos, TD of IPTTC
August 10, 2003