



INTERNATIONAL MIXED MARTIAL ARTS FEDERATION **ANNUAL REPORT**



GENERAL ASSEMBLY. MANAMA
17 NOVEMBER 2017

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IMMAF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS
AMATEUR MMA
LAS VEGAS 2016



IMMAF'S 2028 OLYMPIC DESTINY

2017 has been a defining year for the IMMAF in which our founding vision to become an Olympic sport has crystallised into a tangible goal. All our efforts now are focused on securing MMA a place in the 2028 Olympic Games.

Up until the summer, the bid to host the 2024 Games was still underway as a two-horse race between Paris and Los Angeles. Because a host city has the power to elect non-Olympic sports into the Games programme, we were watching closely. And as we continued to lobby aside the CFMMA (Commission Française de Mixed Martial Arts) against the unjust ban on MMA in France, our hopes were pinned on the vote going to Los Angeles to enable us to realise our dream.

The bid race was brought to an abrupt finish in July by an unprecedented IOC proposal: The 2024 and 2028 Olympic Games were simultaneously allocated to Los Angeles and Paris, with Los Angeles opting for the 2028 edition. With our battle over MMA continuing to rage in France and with the Los Angeles Games now a reality, we must overlook 2024, but know our prospects in the United States to be strong.

We invite you to unite with IMMAF in working towards the final achievement of our founding vision and commit to seeing Amateur MMA into the Olympics in 2028:

Amateur MMA in the Olympic Games will be a hugely symbolic achievement for us. But more than that it will



unlock doors to better development and funding for our sport, as well as improved safety and safeguarding, from the grassroots upwards worldwide. It will place our struggle for global sport recognition well behind us and set us on the path for eventual full IOC inclusion. I am anticipating the day when the world's best MMA competitors can expect to compete every four years on the world's most elite competition platform. It will be a defining moment for MMA and its athletes.

The legacy of this achievement will belong to every person who has joined us on our journey – the Board, Committees and Administration team, the IMMAF membership including Championships Host Federations, our Athletes and Officials, our partners at UFC, our Sponsors and

Broadcasters plus all the Volunteers that participate in IMMAF and IMMAF member events, regionally and internationally. The attainment of IMMAF's Olympic dream will stand as the ultimate celebration of our hard work and commitment over the years – and more broadly than that, to the founders of the sport and to all those who have contributed to the development of MMA since its inception in the 90s.

This achievement belongs to us and is within reach.
Together we will succeed!

PRESIDENT'S OVERVIEW 2016-2017



By IMMAF President
Kerrith Brown

BOARD & GOVERNANCE

In our quest for excellence, IMMAF has partnered with the Sport Integrity Global Alliance (SIGA) an organisation that has developed Universal Standards in order to advance the highest level of good governance in Sporting Organisations. A three-tier benchmarking and development process (that includes bronze,

silver and gold standards) has been created to rank best practice in democracy, transparency, accountability and stakeholder representation. At present IMMAF, as a relatively young federation, is progressing well in its work to attain the bronze standard and hopes to progress to the silver standard in 2018.

The Board has welcomed two Non-Executive Directors this year to expand the field of expertise among its members. Courtney Braun, Senior Vice President & Associate General Counsel at WME|IMG and Colonel Khalid Al Khayat, President of the Bahrain Mixed Martial Arts Federation both have specific skill sets that will enhance an already strong Board.

TEAM IMMAF

The IMMAF Administration is a five-member team of extraordinary individuals whose collective efforts deliver the vision of IMMAF to you all; a loyal group of people whose hard work and dedication continues to secure the future of MMA globally. Although a small team they are dynamic in their impact and appreciated by myself and the Board for their continued support. We hope to expand the team over the next year in order to maintain standards in accordance with growing demand.

MEMBERS

The IMMAF family continues to expand. We welcomed five new federations in 2017 taking our membership to 68, while the membership applications of a further 10 federations are currently being processed.

A federation Health Check has been conducted this year in order to engage with members and identify where support is needed. We are aware of and currently working on issues relating to MyNextMatch, funding of national federations and other obstacles to your progress.

Moving into 2018, Board members will increase their engagement with members and be proactive in addressing individual federation's needs. Our aim is to deliver a workable structure for all.

RECOGNITION AND REGULATION: MMA IS FINALLY ON THE MAP, BUT IS IT CONSIDERED A SPORT YET?

MMA was given a worldwide platform this year when Conor McGregor stripped his arsenal down to that of one of MMA's core sports. His professional boxing debut against Floyd Mayweather was one of the most anticipated contests of the year. Although the event was not without controversy it boded well for the profile of MMA and paid witness to the far-reaching popularity of the sport.

However, for true recognition and regulation, the political landscape must change, and we as a federation must continue our robust lobbying of sports ministers to gain government support. As the year has progressed, we have heard from many of you that you are making headway in gaining support from your governments. This is a sure testament to the hard work of your presidents and members.

GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL SPORTS FEDERATIONS (GAISF)/FORMERLY SPORTACCORD

Once again IMMAF was met with hostility at the SportAccord Convention in Aarhus earlier this year. The entrenched positions held by the leading figures of this institution don't look to be changing any time soon.

Again, we stood our ground and were proactive in engaging with key figures to state our case. These included International Judo Federation President Marius Vizer, President of United World Wrestling, Nenad Lalovic, and the President of International Federation of Muay Thai Amateur Stephan Fox who is also Vice President of SportAccord and President of the Independent Recognised Members of SportAccord. We were granted meetings with these individuals to initiate discussions and welcome the opportunity to further discussions.

There exists strong opposition to our application for sport recognition, but this will not deter us from our journey to become an Olympic sport.

SPORT DEVELOPMENT

The implementation of the IMMAF Talent Development System will create a pathway and structure in which MMA's participants can safely work to attain measurable levels of accomplishment before progressing to the next stage in their learning. The progression scheme will create a global consistency in the promotion of excellence.

This standard of excellence is also reflected in educational courses for coaches, referees and cutmen. Only courses approved by IMMAF will be recognised and only accredited

individuals may take part in IMMAF Championship events. Guidelines for Youth Development are also being finalised to give guidance regarding the safe inclusion of youths in MMA.

EVENTS CALENDAR

The addition of Junior European Championships and Junior World Championships will take the number of annual IMMAF events to seven in 2018-19, increasing the number platforms on which to celebrate the sport of amateur MMA.

The number of competitors and federations is increasing per event, but some federations persist in failing to engage. We would encourage these federations to make every effort to participate and IMMAF itself will make every effort to assist in facilitating this.

I would like to thank the following Federations for a job well done in hosting events through 2017: Bulgaria (European Open), Singapore (Asian Open), South Africa (African Open), and finally I wish all the best to Bahrain in hosting the 2017 World Championships.

If any federations wish to host future events and raise the profile of MMA within their region, IMMAF welcomes the opportunity to explore new avenues.

SPONSORSHIP

In 2017 we welcomed WME | IMG as investment partners of UFC – our primary sponsor – and therefore this year we underwent a transition period in the relationship. Ultimately, IMMAF has maintained a fruitful partnership and has secured ongoing support for the foreseeable future.

I would like to thank funding partner UFC for their continued support, as well as IMMAF's other partners, SAFEJAWZ, Green Hill, MyNextMatch, Midpoint, Safe MMA and Extreme Sports Channel.

FINANCE

2017 presented another challenging year financially caused by decreased funding, recovery from the cost of the European Open and unanticipated legal costs. We have therefore been unable to invest the much-needed finance into key areas of sport development that is so vital to the

recognition and regulation of the sport of MMA. However, we have worked to develop IMMAF's income streams this year, and look forward to a more financially rewarding year in 2018 in which we hope to be able to invest more into IMMAF's most important asset – you the members.

COMMUNICATION

IMMAF adheres to a policy of being 'open' and 'approachable', and welcomes your feedback. By keeping the channels of communication open to all we equally encourage interaction between federations of different countries and continents. We all share a common goal and it's only through working together that we will succeed.

SUMMARY

It has been a significant year for IMMAF in which we have enjoyed worldwide exposure and continued to raise the profile of MMA, despite the controversy, scepticism and perception barriers which surround our sport and serve as a constant reminder that the journey ahead is a long one.

As a former athlete and the President of IMMAF, I have found it frustrating that our investment into the development and progression of MMA has been hindered by both timely and costly political intervention.

The application processes for SportAccord and WADA recognition have become battlegrounds, as we endure the arduous task of changing the mindset of the traditionalists and encouraging them to step out of their comfort zone to open their minds to MMA. We continue to stand firm in our quest to deliver the vision of IMMAF.

As a Federation, with continued support from you the members, we continue to grow not only in number but also in stature as the leading international MMA federation. This has brought the likes of the WMMAA (World Mixed Martial Arts Association) to our doorstep to propose a merger which will further expand the reach of IMMAF.

IMMAF has surpassed its targets again this year but must remain consistent in its pursuit of excellence. There is no room for complacency. It is imperative that we sustain our momentum in order to fulfil our goals and see MMA included as an exhibition sport in the Los Angeles Olympic Games in 2028. This a brave and bold statement but together we can and will succeed!



CEO REPORT



By IMMAF Chief
Executive Officer
Densign White

Dear Members,

There has been a very high intensity of activity in 2017. As you read through this activity report I am sure you will gain an appreciation of how much hard work has been carried out by the IMMAF team, and progress made towards our shared objectives.

MEMBER SERVICES

This year my priority has been the area of membership services and how we can help you the members to be more successful at your local level and how to support your efforts to generate income, gain recognition and to grow the sport.

To that end we have been encouraging federations to use the MyNextMatch digital platform to register members and to take annual subscriptions. This is a unique opportunity for our members to have their own customized relationship management tool at no cost. Having access to this facility also allows you and IMMAF to have membership data at our fingertips, which is not presently readily available. My guess is that if most of our federations were asked to provide membership statistics most would struggle to provide even basic information. This is the type of data that as a sport we need for media communication and marketing and for attracting sponsors. Without accurate numbers we are not going to know with certainty how the sport is developing, or be able to identify areas to which resources need to be targeted to stimulate growth.

We are rolling out education training for referees, judges, cutmen and most recently coaches. The progression scheme has been completed and is being piloted in a number of European locations.

Retention of members is an issue for many sports but is a particular problem for combat sports because of the extraordinary intensity and physical demands of the sport. We therefore need tools to help our federation clubs and gyms to keep the grass roots members motivated to continue their participation. The progression scheme will also raise technical standards, improve coaching practice and raise safety levels.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

As an ongoing process to make IMMAF qualify for recognition and join the Olympic family of sports we have worked extremely hard to ensure that we have the highest standard of governance. As has been reported already

IMMAF earlier this year became the 5th Early Adopter of the SIGA Standards, opening itself up for independent scrutiny by the Sport Integrity Global Alliance for Good Governance, Financial Integrity and Betting Integrity. The SIGA mark gives IMMAF governance processes a seal of approval from a third-party authority, established by world leaders in sport.

I was invited to join a panel discussion about Good Governance at the SIGA Sport Integrity Forum in Lisbon this summer, which provided an opportunity for me to highlight corruption and conflicts of interest within the sport recognition process and sports establishment through telling IMMAF's story.

We have introduced two non-executive members to the board, Ms Courtney Braun VP of WME-IMG and Mr. Khalid Khayyat president of the Bahrain Federation. These appointments can only strengthen the board because both bring particular skills and experience that were lacking and also add further diversity to our board. Courtney is a lawyer and Khalid is a Colonel in the Bahrain police force, and brings experience from his role in the Bahrain Olympic Committee and national boards of other recognised sports.

Good governance does not just apply to the IMMAF International Federation. Our expectation is that all IMMAF member federations will also embody the same values and compliance to our statutes.

At minimum, members should be holding Annual General Meetings involving their membership. Directors and Presidents should be elected with fixed term time in office. The board should meet regularly with minutes taken and year-end financial accounts should be audited and approved by the General Assembly. These are the minimum standards and this list is not exhaustive by any means. We are following up with all federations to make sure as far as we can that this is happening but with close on 70 members globally we obviously are constrained by financial considerations.

We are therefore very much relying on members to provide any information requested with regards to Governance, and that is why in January of this year all federations would have received a health check questionnaire to be returned to us. The returned health checks only totalled 10, which is a very poor response indeed and is cause for concern. Nevertheless, we are not discouraged and we will continue to strive for a higher level of engagement. I think the importance of good governance protocol may have escaped some federations and might also explain why some of our federations are not able to gain recognition either from their NOC or from Government Ministries of Sport.

SPORTACCORD/GAISF

IMMAF has recognition challenges ahead. As you know we applied to SportAccord (now called Global Association of International Sport Federations – GAISF), for membership in 2016 and we also applied to World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) to become a code signatory.

The situation with SportAccord/GAISF is that our application is still with them pending a decision as to whether we will be granted 'observation status'. The status which was introduced at this year's congress as a means to managing the many applications they are sitting on currently. The attainment of observation status would indicate that all criteria for membership has been met and the application is ready to be voted on by the GAISF members.

SPORTACCORD CONVENTION

IMMAF hosted a stand at the 2017 Sport Accord Convention, speaking with GAISF members, influencers and journalists. We also met with the senior leadership in the World Anti-Doping Agency to explore the reasons why our application was blocked.

In June we were invited to Lausanne to meet SportAccord representatives at the membership workshop. The main obstacle we face is "rivalry" – both rivalry charges from existing combat sports inside SportAccord and

also rivalry from other international MMA federations. The World Mixed Martial Arts Association (WMMAA) has also submitted its own application to SportAccord. Clearly only one International Federation can become a member that represents the sport of MMA. Both International Federations have received a clear and unambiguous message back from SportAccord that unless there is some agreement to work together and to support one application for MMA membership that neither application can be considered.

The good news is that IMMAF and WMMAA have had some dialogue, with discussions ongoing. I am confident that in the not-too-distant future we will have an agreement that satisfies the needs of both parties.

SportAccord have further informed us that there is no possibility that we will be in a position to be voted upon before their next congress assuming we achieve observation status, before 2019. That means that we have less than 18 months in which to implement our strategy to win support among the SportAccord members who will vote to decide our fate. As of today we can assume that we are starting with minus 15 votes, made up of the current combat sport members that we cannot rely on to support our application.

WORLD ANTI-DOPING AGENCY (WADA)

Despite WADA rejecting our application, we continue with our anti-doping programme. IMMAF is testing athletes at every event, not just medallists but also athletes selected at random. Unfortunately, we have uncovered a number of positive tests in the past few months, and for those athletes the sanctions have been very severe with up to four years' bans imposed. Prevention is better than cure and that is why this year during the European Championships in Sofia we invited IMMAF Anti-Doping Consultant, Michele Verroken, to deliver training workshops about the WADA code and how athletes can avoid testing positive. Supplements and cold remedies for example can be problematic and of particular concern. In MMA, are athletes forcing dramatic weight loss and then using illegal methods to rehydrate. Coaches and athletes need to be made more aware of the risks, and so these training sessions will continue to be delivered during IMMAF Competition Weeks, as time and resources permit.

To conclude this report I would like to take this opportunity to thank the IMMAF President Kerrith Brown, the IMMAF Board Members, our Senior Management team, IMMAF Commission members, our sponsors UFC, Greenhill and SAFEJAWZ, our member federations and all of the many volunteers and officials for their continued support without which many of our achievements this year would not have been possible.

Densign White - IMMAF CEO



THE IMMAF BOARD



KERRITH BROWN
PRESIDENT



GEORGE SALLFELDT
VICE PRESIDENT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



COURTNEY BRAUN



AUGUST WALLEN



BERTRAND AMOUSSOU



FRANK BABCOCK



STEWART BRAIN



WISSAM ABI NADER



RAYMOND PHILLIPS



KHALID AL KHAYYAT



TOM MADSEN

THE IMMAF ADMINISTRATION TEAM



DENSIGN WHITE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



ISOBEL CARNWATH
DIRECTOR OF BRAND
MARKETING &
COMMUNICATIONS



GOSHA MALIK
ADMINISTRATION
AND MEMBERS
SERVICES MANAGER



ALISTAIR PETTITT
CHAMPIONSHIPS
AND EVENTS
MANAGER



JORDEN CURRAN
CONTENT AND
ATHLETE RECORDS
MANAGER

COMMITTEES

Coaching Committee:

Danny Corr (N. Ireland), John Kavanagh (Ireland),
Bertrand Amoussou (France), Vito Paollilo (Italy),
Luis Barneto (Portugal), Alan Packman (UK)

Medical Committee:

Dr. Randa Basharon (USA), Dr. David H Wang (USA),
Prof. Dan Healy (Ireland)

Anti-doping/ TUE Committee:

Dr. Mike Loosemore (UK), Dr Jack Kreindler (UK),
Dr David H Wang (USA)

Regulatory Affairs Committee:

Marc Ratner (USA), Marc Goddard (UK)

CONSULTANTS & AGENTS

Brand and Design: Shoot the Moon

Broadcast Production: David Green, Giant TV

Broadcast Sales: Steven Morris, Broadreach TV

Anti-Doping Consultant: Michele Verrroken

Medical Manger: Yoni Gottlieb, Safe MMA

Membership Management System: MyNextMatch



REGIONAL REPORT: EUROPE

FRANCE

IMMAF is at the forefront of the fight against the ban on MMA in France. With the UFC's support we have been instrumental in the development of a strategic global plan to have the ban removed. With the recent change of Government in France our prospects of effecting a change have accelerated. In the meantime, we continue to support our member federation in France with their court writ against the French government.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

In May, IMMAF CEO Densign White and Brand, Marketing and Communications Director Isobel Carnwath represented IMMAF at a Council of Europe hearing in Paris. The hearing was called to review the 1999 Recommendation on Cage-fighting/Free-fighting that informs the MMA ban in France and in other parts of Europe. IMMAF founder and Honorary President August Wallen also testified at the hearing.

NEW MEMBERS

In 2017 IMMAF welcomed new European members, the Belarusian Federation of Pankration and Martial Arts and the Cyprus Mixed Martial Arts Federation (CMMAF).

2016 & 2017 EUROPEAN OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Fast on the heels of the 2016 European Open Championships hosted by the Czech MMA Association in Prague last November, Bulgaria hosted the 2017 European Open in March in Sofia, with the backing of the Bulgarian sports minister. The 3rd IMMAF staging on the continent consolidated the European Open as IMMAF's most popular continental event, with Teams Sweden and Bulgaria battling it out for top position.

DENMARK

In March, MMA gained government recognition in Denmark rendering the sport subject to regulation by law. Well done to the Danish MMA Federation for their groundbreaking achievement!



2017 IMMAF

EUROPEAN OPEN AMATEUR MMA

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29 MAR – 2 APRIL

EFE HOTEL MARINELA





REGIONAL REPORT: OCEANIA

By IMMAF Board Director Stewart Brain (Australia)

2017 has been a year of great success for the IMMAF Oceania region, one in which many goals have been achieved.

Australia has consolidated effective state organisations for the regulation of MMA in Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales and just recently Western Australia. Further to that, IMMAFA has recently been approved as a sanctioning body for amateur competitions in Victoria and sanctioned its first event last September, which featured a 25-bout card. Whilst there were some initial teething issues it was a great success. A further three events have been proposed this year for IMMAFA sanctioning, one of which will be held in South Australia, in a first for the state.

Thanks to time and effort contributed by Mr. Joe Minehan, we have been pleased to announce the first IMMAF Oceania Open Championships as taking place in Melbourne at the Arnold Sports Festival in March 2018. MMA will be the featured martial art event of the festival, with the IMMAFA cage centre-floor and surrounded by dedicated seating.

We plan for the Oceania Open to be live streamed (subject to existing IMMAF broadcast agreements), and will be offering all IMMAF member federations 10% of revenue on national subscriptions to encourage them to promote the stream in their countries. The IMMAF and IMMAFA also stand to share in the profits. We propose this model as a template for future IMMAF partnerships with the Arnold Sports Festival in other countries.

While there are a number of IMMAF nations that have progressed to a high level in terms of sport recognition and development (e.g. Sweden and USA), I believe that New Zealand has elevated itself to not only the premier MMA country in Oceania but a legitimate power on the world scene.

The achievement of two gold and two bronze medals at the last world championships, in both men's and women's divisions (Brayden Graham: Gold, Byron Chivers: Gold, Sarah Archer: Bronze, Jess Bradley: Bronze), serves as a testament to the dedication of the NZ MMA organisation within IMMAF.

It would be remiss of me not to mention Sensei Matt Toa for his enduring support of all MMA events not only worldwide but also within our region, bringing teams to Australia for most major events. I personally look forward to Team New Zealand raising the bar even further at this forthcoming world championships and at the 2018 IMMAF Oceania Open Championships at the Arnold Sports Festival.

Samoa produced the first competitor in its history at the IMMAF Asian Open this year in Singapore and we look forward to Tonga and Fiji completing their membership applications in 2018.

In closing, I would like to thank Kerrith, Densign, Izzy, Gosha and Alistair for all the support and assistance given to our region in the past 12 months and look forward to a progressive and exciting 2018.



2018 IMMAF
OCEANIA OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS
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16 - 18 MARCH 2018

2018 IMMAF OCEANIA OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS AT ARNOLD SPORTS FESTIVAL
MELBOURNE EXHIBITION AND CONVENTION CENTRE

IMMAFA AUSTRALIAN
ASF CHAMPIONSHIP

ALSO
HAPPENING

IMMAFA MODIFIED MMA
ASF CHAMPIONSHIP



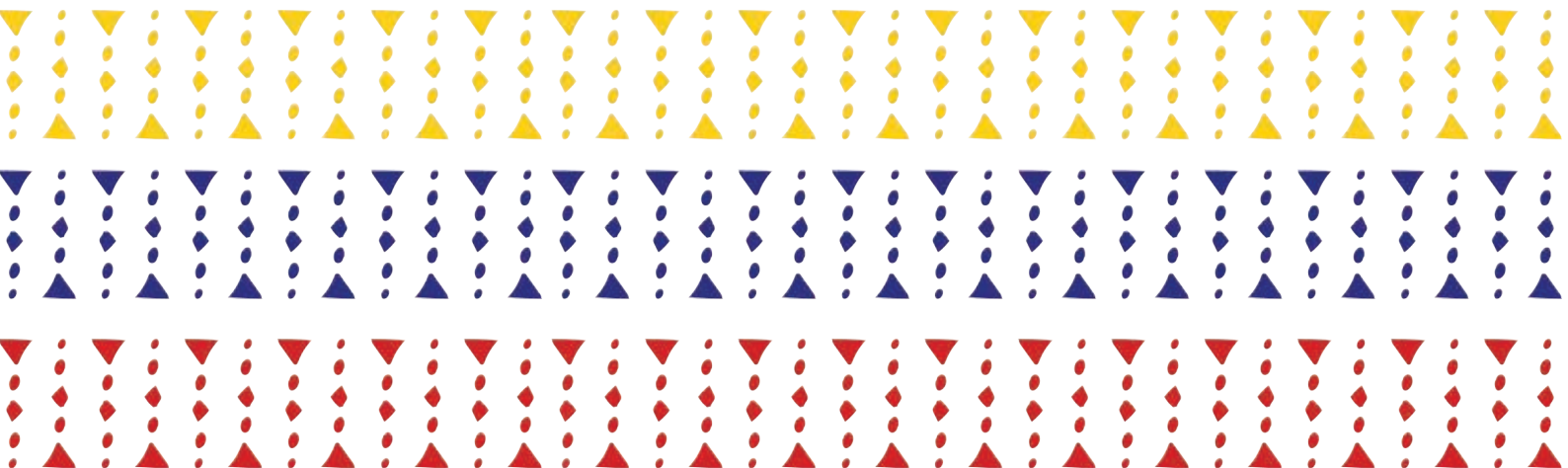


REGIONAL REPORT: AFRICA

By IMMAF Board Director, Raymond Phillips (South Africa)

Over the two years of my IMMAF directorship, we at MMASA (Mixed Martial Arts South Africa) have built positive relationships across the African continent and made good progress with various MMA federations within it. Our main initiative is to facilitate the joining of these federations to IMMAF and to educate them in its processes.

In 2017 MMASA hosted the IMMAF Africa Open Championships for the second year running. Although small, the event attracted interest from potential future hosts among African federations and commercial parties. We saw sponsors and media start to sit up and take more serious notice of what IMMAF is doing internationally and locally.



With the help of the Mauritius MMA Federation we plan to unite all the continent's islands and create structures that will support the development of MMA and competition on an intercontinental level.

Myself and Mr. Ferdi Basson, with the assistance of IMMAF HQ and MMASA, have created educational opportunities for other African federations to host national level judges' and referees' courses. Mauritius was the first country after South Africa to host an IMMAF Judges and Referees Licensing Course. South Africa had the privilege of welcoming Mr. Marc Goddard last year and we look forward to hosting further international level courses with him.

We also saw growth in participation: Last year, just three nations attended the inaugural Africa Open – South Africa, Sweden and India. This year, five Nations came – South Africa, Bahrain, India, Russia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. We have seen the potential of regional fighters who competed at the IMMAF Africa Open through competitors from the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Africa. I predict even greater achievements from African talent, in the near future.

Although Africa faces many disadvantages, it has a great spirit and with IMMAFs guidance and support I believe we will achieve our goals.





2017 IMMAF

AFRICA OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS AMATEUR MMA SOUTH AFRICA



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28 AUG - 2 SEP 2017

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA





REGIONAL REPORT: ASIA

By Board Director, Wissam Abi Nader (Lebanon)

The Asian continent was very active this year. In June it hosted the first IMMAF Asian Open Championships in Singapore, supported by the UFC's on-going commitment to developing MMA in the region. Amateur athletes from 16 countries all over Asia and across the world participated in the event, attracting the commitment of the China International Mixed Martial Arts Federation to hosting the 2018 Asian Open.

Asia is a spiritual home to many martial arts traditions, and renowned as a continent for its talent. Kung Fu's founding nation, China, and Taekwondo's founding nation, South Korea, both joined the IMMAF family in 2017. The year culminates with the 2017 IMMAF World Championships,

hosted in Asia by the Bahrain Mixed Martial Arts Federation (BMAAF) in Manama at Khalifa Sports City Arena from 12 to 19 November, as part of Brave International Combat Week. The tournament is expected to be IMMAF's biggest yet, drawing around 300 competitors. Driven by His Highness Sheikh Khalid Bin Hamad, the Kingdom of Bahrain has taken extraordinary strides in both developing MMA in the country and in building its profile on the world stage as a leading proponent of the sport globally.

It's great to see Asian heroes on the world stage. Asians are among the best in the world at martial arts.





2017 IMMAF

ASIAN OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS AMATEUR MMA SINGAPORE



12 – 18 JUNE 2017

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REGIONAL REPORT: AMERICA

By UMMAF Vice President, Ryan Brueggeman

The United States of America made significant strides in 2017 by expanding its sanctioning footprint within the country. The United States Mixed Martial Arts Federation has maintained its relationship with promotions in the Midwest and Western parts of the nation, but also experienced significant growth in the southeast regions of the country due to the tireless efforts of UMMAF Southeast Regional Director Justin Brown.

UMMAF continues its mission of unified regulation within the United States for amateur MMA, partnership with state athletic commissions, training of officials, judges and inspectors as well as improving the quality of our annual National Championship Tournament which determines the team that competes in IMMAF events internationally.

UMMAF recently partnered with the United States Fight League. The USFL has become the youth development arm of UMMAF, enforcing strict regulation of youth events under an age appropriate rule set, as well as background checks for coaches and proper medical requirements. UMMAF licensed officials have begun training under the USFL rules in anticipation of our first youth event to be held in conjunction with the 2018 UMMAF National Championships on February 1–3, hosted by Midwest Fight League President and UMMAF board member Robert Hulett, who also serves as Team USA Head Coach.

UMMAF looks forward to continually improving the landscape of amateur MMA in the United States and advancing the ultimate goal of Olympic recognition.

PAN AMERICA

By Administration and Member Services Manager, Gosha Malik

Pan America is a region of huge growth potential, in which IMMAF is generating a lot of interest with many new member applications in process.

2017 saw the MMA Jamaica Sports Federation join Trinidad and Tobago Mixed Martial Arts Federation and Empire Mixed Martial Arts Bahamas as IMMAF representatives in the Caribbean.

Meanwhile, OCAMM (Asociación Colombiana de Artes Marciales Mixtas) and FAMMJL (Federación de Artes Marciales Mixtas Equidad y Juego Limpio) have been extremely active in promoting IMMAF's educational programme within their countries of Colombia and Mexico in 2017.

The 2017 World Championships sees the return of a Brazilian national team to the IMMAF stage, and a World Championship debut for Team Mexico.





MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Administration and Member Services Manager,
Gosha Malik

IMMAF has this year focused on the quality of the federations under its jurisdiction, since it is crucial for our GAISF (Sport Accord) recognition that good governance is implemented across our membership. Good Governance is also a contributing factor to the strength and healthy growth of federations.

Therefore, a Health Check was introduced in IMMAF's 5th anniversary year and sent to all member federations on 3 January 2017. Through identifying areas of weakness in our member organisations, the census will enable IMMAF to concentrate support in vital areas.

Meanwhile, there has been a marked increase in the number of national federations now applying for IMMAF membership, which is an accolade to the achievements of the IMMAF family worldwide. A number of these are only waiting for their final inspection visit by IMMAF before they can be officially accepted

A lot of interest has been generated in South America through our Colombian and Mexican federations spreading news about the work of IMMAF to their neighbouring countries. Excitingly, we have a team representing Panama for the first time in an IMMAF event, at the 2017 World Championships in Bahrain.

IMMAF's new affiliates have excelled in their implementation of educational courses and in their growth of club membership using the MyNextMatch member database. System training has been offered and provided by Andreas Georgiou from MyNextMatch and myself. We continue to encourage all members to engage with the digital platform, as it provides a framework for monetising federation services to enable self-sufficiency and sustainability.

An online membership application form is also due for launch via the (new) IMMAF website, providing newcomers with an easy, step-by-step system for uploading information and relevant documents. This will markedly streamline the application process.

Member Services in 2017 have heavily focused on education too, since courses are another service that will help federations to grow.



IMMAF EDUCATION & LICENSING

By Administration and Member Services Manager,
Gosha Malik

2017 has been a successful year for IMMAF's education programme.

JUDGES & REFEREES EDUCATION

The year started with IMMAF's Judges & Referees Licensing course in India, where 12 nationally selected judges and referees were trained. The All India Mixed Martial Arts Federation has been a leader in promoting education among the MMA community in its region. The request for another course in 2018 has been submitted, and plans for a Cutman Licensing Course are under discussion.

Further courses followed in Dublin, Mexico, Rome and Poland, with the final course in 2017 scheduled for Colombia on 10 December. A total of 44 new officials graduated this year and received MMA judges' and referees' licences.

CUTMAN EDUCATION

The first Cutman Course of the year took place in Dublin on 22 January as the IMMAF Cutman Academy opened its doors to participants largely from across Europe, but also from Malaysia.

Our federation in Mexico (FAMMEJL) hosted both courses in April creating a profession for 28 Cutmen and Cutwomen and 12 Judges and Referees, under IMMAF licence.

COACHES EDUCATION

Meanwhile, IMMAF's Coaches Licensing Course launched its primary modules in Bury (United Kingdom) on 28 February in the first of four pilots. Teaching videos have been created by the Commission Française de Mixed Martial Arts (CFMMA) and the United Kingdom Mixed Martial Arts Federation (UKMMAF). The materials are available via the MyNextMatch platform.

The second pilot was hosted by the Irish Mixed Martial Arts Association in Dublin. 28 coaches of different levels of experience took part in the course which focused on IMMAF's Talent Development System. All participants were awarded the first IMMAF MMA Coaching Licenses, which grant permission to practice MMA coaching under IMMAF.

The Lebanese MMA Committee and Ulster Amateur MMA Association (Northern Ireland) hosted the final two pilots in the series. The course will now be modified in response to feedback in order to be presented to the Board of Directors in its finalised form for 2018.

Requests for the course have been received from other members in Luxembourg (Fédération Luxembourgeoise de MMA), India (All India Mixed Martial Arts Association), Colombia (Asociación Colombiana de Artes Marciales Mixtas – OCAMM) and Cyprus (Cyprus Mixed Martial Arts Federation).

CERTIFICATION

The MyNextMatch membership platform is utilised for the recording of gradings and the certification for all successful candidates.

It is crucial that all our member federations start to provide national level training. We have received many requests from around the world to deliver IMMAF's series of courses in 2018.



CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS REPORT

By Championships Manager, Alistair Pettitt

In 2017 IMMAF has held three continental championship events in Europe (Sofia), Asia (Singapore) and Africa (Johannesburg). The Singapore event marked IMMAF's inaugural Asia Open and its first event on the continent.

The 2017 World Championships sees IMMAF's flagship event move away from the USA for the first time in IMMAF's history as the tournament plays out in Bahrain, hosted by the Bahrain MMA Federation. This year the Championships calendar was reordered to move the World Championships to the end of the year. The intention is that countries may accumulate ranking points across the year in order to qualify for seeded world championships. This marks a change from previous years, in which the World Championships in Las Vegas fell in the middle of the year to chime with UFC International Fight Week.

2017 IMMAF European Open Championships - Sofia, Bulgaria:

Total number of athletes = 127

Total number of national teams = 26

2017 IMMAF Asian Open Championships – Singapore:

Total number of athletes = 62

Total number of national teams = 22

2017 IMMAF Africa Open Championships – Johannesburg, South Africa:

Total number of athletes = 24

Total number of national teams = 5

IMMAF ATHLETES & THE AMATEUR MMA RANKINGS

By IMMAF Content and Athlete Records Manager,
Jorden Curran

In April, Sweden's Cornelia Holm took over from Gabriella Ringblom as the no.1 ranked athlete in the IMMAF pound-for-pound rankings. Since then the crown has passed to Irman Smajic, also of Sweden, following his gold medal triumph at the Asian Open Championships in Singapore.

While the top eight pound-for-pound positions are occupied by either Swedish or Bulgarian athletes, the individual weight categories are beginning to show other hopefuls making ground on their Swedish and Bulgarian counterparts.

Among these, some familiar faces are climbing the rankings thanks to talent development under their national federations and their continued participation in IMMAF championship events. In addition, some new faces have burst onto the IMMAF platform to snatch gold and immediately assert themselves as top contenders. This year the likes of Sanan Safarli (Azerbaijan), Hussain Abdulla (Bahrain) and Imad Hoayek (Lebanon) have enjoyed breakthrough performances that placed them and their nations significantly higher in their respective divisions. Meanwhile, fresh faces such as Hannah Scoggins (USA), Abdulmanap Magomedov (Russia), Dario Bellandi (Italy) and Adam Amarasinghe (UK) have each claimed IMMAF titles to forge positions as number one seeds at the World Championships.

National teams have commonly struggled to source female representation over the years. Despite this, the Flyweight division continues to be one of the most compelling and (at time of writing) is expected to enjoy high participation in Bahrain. The top four ranking positions belong to Gabriella Ringblom (Sweden), Alexandra Kovacs (Hungary), Anette Osterberg (Finland) and Anja Saxmark (Sweden) – all consistent medallists at IMMAF tournaments, creating some passionate competition. Their combined ranking points are higher than that of any other division in IMMAF.

Over the past 12 months, IMMAF has said goodbye to several champions whom have announced their decision to move onto the professional ranks, many having already done so to prominent starts thanks to their amateur accolades. Great champions and athletes whom we can expect to relinquish their top rank positions to make the professional leap soon include Abdul Hussein (Finland), Adam Amarasinghe (UK), Ferdun Osmanov (Bulgaria), Alexandra Toncheva (Bulgaria), Will Starks (USA), Rostem Akman (Sweden), Gabriella Ringblom (Sweden), Cornelia Holm (Sweden) and Leah McCourt (Northern Ireland),

IMMAF GENERAL ASSEMBLY REPORT: BRAND, COMMERCIAL, BROADCAST & PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT

By IMMAF Brand, Marketing and Communications Director, Isobel Carnwath

BRAND & CREATIVE DESIGN

In 2017 IMMAF launched its Brand Refresh as conceptualised by design agency Shoot The Moon.

The Brand Refresh included a revised interpretation of the IMMAF logo to constitute a minimalist rendering of the icon and create a more dynamic look and feel.

Uniquely, national identifier logos were also created for and gifted to IMMAF members worldwide to synchronise brand recognition across the IMMAF family and increase our united brand footprint globally. New identifier logos were created for IMMAF's World and Continental Championship event series.

Contracted by IMMAF as its design agency for 2017, Shoot The Moon have developed Brand Guidelines and signature key artwork for IMMAF raising the commercial profile and appeal of IMMAF assets and bringing consistency to the IMMAF brand.

BROADCAST

IMMAF's Extreme Sports Channel deal continued into 2017 with broadcast of IMMAF's Championships highlights programmes across 30 million households in Europe, Middle East and Africa.

The 2017 IMMAF World Championships will be IMMAF's first event to be live television broadcast, going out in the Middle East via Bahrain TV and Abu Dhabi TV.

Other IMMAF broadcast deals this year have included BT Sport (UK), the Fight Network (Africa, Middle East, Canada), Sky Sports (New Zealand) and Bahrain TV (Bahrain).

The renewal of IMMAF's Extreme Sports Channel deal at the close of the year permits IMMAF to negotiate more beneficial and less exclusive terms, opening the doors to opportunities with other broadcasters.

IMMAF is also considering live stream options for 2018, with the Oceania Open the first event to be showcased live online.

Broadcast sales lie at the heart of IMMAF's commercial strategy moving into 2018, and IMMAF aims to establish the most profitable mix of television and OTT options in its broadcast portfolio while expanding its audience reach to maximally commercialise the brand.

COMMERCIAL

UFC: IMMAF's partnership with UFC continued into 2017 with collaboration and knowledge sharing in various areas, including the hosting of the inaugural Asian Open Championships during UFC Fight Week, Singapore, the legal challenge against the MMA ban in France and Anti-doping.

IMMAF has submitted its bid to UFC for partnership renewal and continued funding in 2018.

Championships Operations Manual: IMMAF documented its operational processes for its Championships events in its first Manual. The Manual was contributed to by IMMAF sports team staff detailing refined working processes for their respective areas. The Operations Manual serves as an Appendix document to Host Contracts for IMMAF Championship Events.

Bid Book: IMMAF has published its Bid Book guidelines document outlining the bidding application process for IMMAF Championships for potential Host Federations.



Host Cities: The IMMAF President and CEO are working to finalise agreements with Host Federations for the 2018 calendar, and are in further conversations with potential Host Federations and commercial entities for 2019 and beyond.

Sponsorship: IMMAF's athlete equipment and apparel partnership is due for renewal following the World Championships. IMMAF is therefore open to bids from prospective title sponsors for 2018, including new contenders with whom we are in conversation.

Meanwhile, IMMAF continues its licensing agreement with Green Hill, and also resigned with licensee SAFEJAWZ for a 3-year, exclusive cash sponsorship deal.

With IMMAF's Director of Brand and Commerce, David Allen, completing his consultancy contract in 2016, Marketing and Communications Director Isobel Carnwath has recently taken on a more commercial role within IMMAF that includes pitching for new sponsorship as well as managing existing sponsor relations. IMMAF is currently exploring new and innovative sponsorship opportunities.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Vision: As laid out by IMMAF President Kerrith Brown, IMMAF's founding vision has crystallised with a concrete target in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

Attaining IMMAF's 2028 Olympic goal and challenging obstacles posed by opponents of MMA are key drivers of IMMAF's public relations strategy and activities moving into 2018.

MEDIA

IMMAF has successfully established itself as a recognised organisation in the Sport Business and Olympic media, as well as with trade organisations such as Leaders, isportconnect and the Sports Journalist Awards.

IMMAF was the subject of two features in Sport Business magazine during the SportAccord Convention, which was delivered to all delegates.

IMMAF has been the subject of flagship features in industry leading Fighters Only magazine, including a detailed piece on the 2017 World Championships and the development of MMA in Bahrain. IMMAF attracted a

lot of attention again over MMA's Olympic potential, as media covering IMMAF's Olympic journey have included The Sun, The Mirror, MMA Junkie, Yahoo Sport and Men's Fitness.

We have been vocal in documenting our battle for recognition and calling out political enemies, which has been most notably documented by SportCal, Sport Business, Inside the Games, Francs Jeux, Al Jazeera and Around the Rings; as well as French media that includes Le Point, L'Equipe, Europe 1 and Sport365.fr

In 2017, we established a PR representative in each of our national federations, and have been working closely with some of these to give support and syndicate targeted news in specific markets. We have expanded our media footprint into new territories through IMMAF events (notably in Asia with the Asian Open, Bulgaria with the European Open and China and Bahrain through press conferences). The region currently generating the most coverage is the Middle East, through the work of HHSK and BRAVE media team, followed by China, USA, Brazil and UK.

We are working closely with allies and agencies in France to lobby in the media against the MMA ban; and for the World Championships we are working closely with BRAVE media team to generate increased MMA and sports media coverage worldwide.

One key focus area for the development of audience reach in 2018 will be consumer media, bolstered by IMMAF's plans for live streaming/ broadcast.

SOCIAL MEDIA

IMMAF's Twitter and Facebook followers grew organically to 20.2k and 21k (respectively) in 2017, while the IMMAF family is estimated to have garnered a reach of over half a million followers on social media. IMMAF also moved onto Instagram in 2017.

Moving into 2018, social media and video content creation are areas that require significant development alongside that of IMMAF OTT platforms in order to grow IMMAF's audience and fan base. This in turn will increase IMMAF's commercial value and increase our arsenal for the successful activation of sponsor partnerships.

WEBSITE

Based on the new IMMAF Brand Guidelines, a new website has been under development this year due for launch this Autumn.

The website will lay the foundation for the development of further sections for launch in 2018, including; IMMAF Medallists and National Team profile pages, an Anti-doping section and developed IMMAF Committees pages.



COMMITTEE REPORTS: MEDICAL COMMITTEE

IMPLEMENTATION OF IMMAF MEDICAL POLICY

The Medical Policy recommended by the IMMAF Medical Committee in the 2016 Medical Committee Meeting was implemented during 2016 and its practice continued across IMMAF Championship events in 2017. The policy and updates have been included in the IMMAF Operations Manual for Championship Events completed and published this year.



REVIEW

The full Medical Committee was in attendance at the 2017 European Open Championships in Bulgaria, to oversee and review medical policy in operational practice at IMMAF events and to make practical recommendations for improving safety.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

In 2017, the Medical Committee have worked to develop policies in the following areas:

- Junior and Cadet MMA competition rules
- Research into best practice in preventing brain injury

ANNUAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

This year's Annual Medical Committee Meeting will take place during the 2017 IMMAF World Championships in Bahrain, where medical committee representatives will take an active operational role throughout the competition.

MYNEXTMATCH MEDICARD

The IMMAF Medical team has worked with the MyNextMatch team to pilot the innovative MyNextMatch MedicaCard, a digital medical passport system for competitors. The MedicaCard has been piloted at various stages of development at the 2017 IMMAF European Open and the 2017 IMMAF Africa Open. The MyNextMatch team continues to work on the further development of the MedicaCard with the support of IMMAF.

TRAINING

IMMAF is introducing ringside training for qualified doctors and paramedics working at IMMAF events, with the vision of leaving a skills legacy in the host countries that we visit. While countries may have highly qualified medical practitioners, there can often be a shortage of professionals experienced in ringside care.

IMMAF will additionally be working to launch First Aid for MMA courses in 2018, as well as online courses in Concussion Awareness and Athlete Nutrition.

EDUCATION

As part of its Competition Week Seminar Series for participants, IMMAF has included seminars on medical topics that include:

- Concussion and CTE awareness
- Nutrition for Safe Weight Maintenance

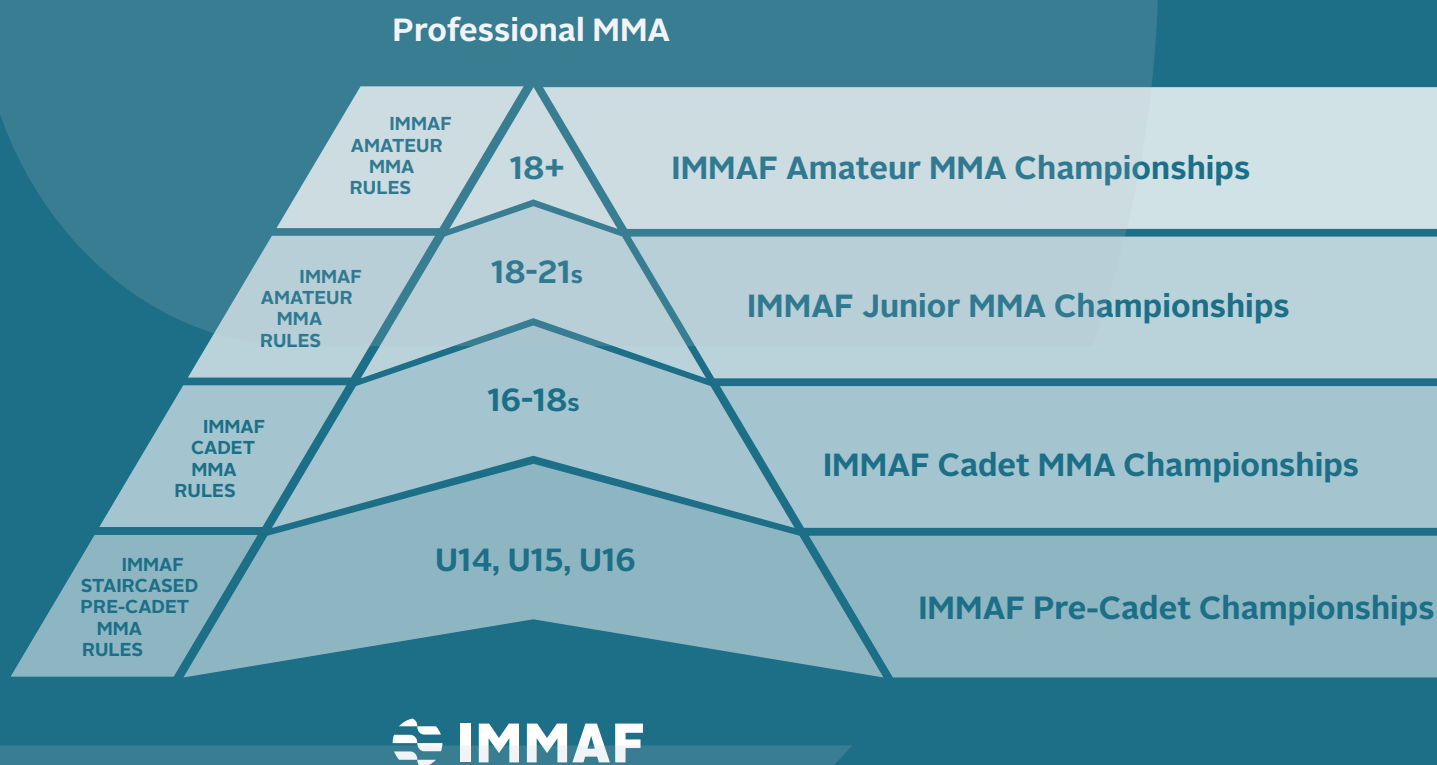


COMMITTEE REPORTS: COACHING COMMITTEE

IMMAF and its Coaching Committee are currently implementing MMA's first international Talent Development Pathway. With its foundational progression scheme and award system already in place, aimed largely at recreational participants, IMMAF is currently rolling out its Coach Licensing Courses which accredit MMA coaches to train students using the progression scheme.

The next big item on IMMAF's agenda is the all-important development of MMA for juniors with the aim of IMMAF launching Junior MMA Championships in 2018. Working within the safety parameters set out by IMMAF's Medical Committee for youths at different stages of puberty, the Coaching Committee has proposed first age-appropriate, competition rule sets for juniors and cadets from the age of 12 upwards.

IMMAF COMPETITION PATHWAY



COMMITTEE REPORTS: REGULATORY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

By Committee Chairman, Marc Goddard

Since the formation of IMMAF and my involvement with the Technical Committee – I have held with both pride and privilege responsibility for the development of referees and judges on a global front.

We have delivered MMA Officials Training & Certification weekends in Northern Ireland, Ireland, Romania, Czech Republic, Italy, Poland, South Africa, Mexico, Australia and the USA. The importance and significance of the IMMAF's work in this area cannot be underestimated. We are now in possession of a truly global register of certified officials to officiate at IMMAF Championship events, and who form an integral part of each tournament's success.

Globally we are raising the profile, education and awareness of officials in the sport at the formative level of amateur competition. More than that, we have made great strides forward in forging the acceptance and recognition of a single unified rule set for global application.

The growth and rise of IMMAF tournaments worldwide poses a new challenge in the population and placement of educated, trained and certified officials to ensure the highest standards of safety and fairness. This is critical to the future success of the IMMAF movement.

We shall continue to build upon the successes we have gained so far. The platform and window of opportunity that IMMAF's international tournaments provide for amateur athletes is shaped by the referees and judges that officiate each and every tournament match. Therefore, the continued training, assessment and certification of officials under the IMMAF banner remain fundamental to IMMAF's future success.

Thank you.





2017 IMMAF

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS AMATEUR MMA

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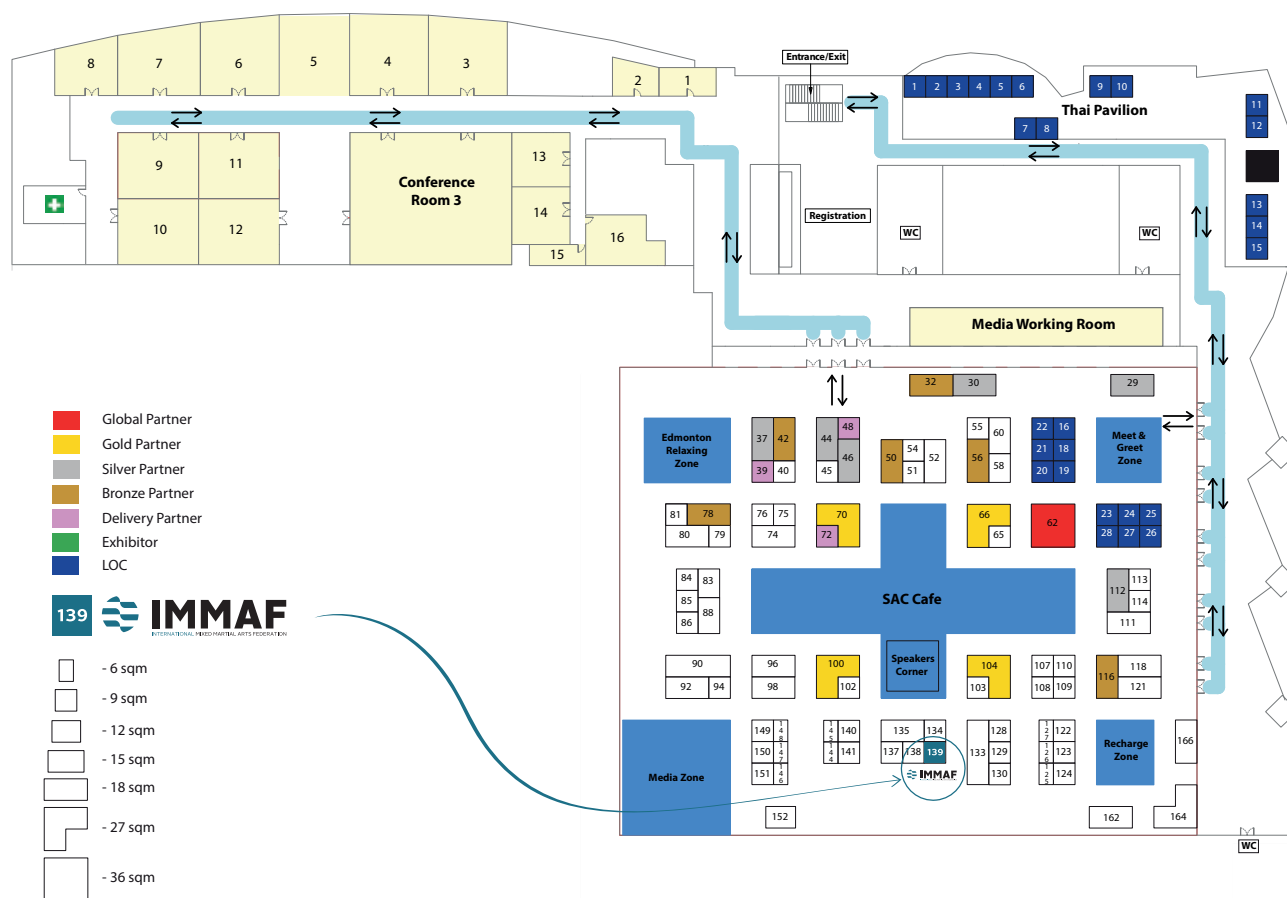
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