

ANNUAL REPORT



20192020

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PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

DEAR MEMBERS,

BOARD AND GOVERNANCE

Last November saw the completion of the merger between IMMAF and WMMAA, as WMMAA delegates were democratically elected to the IMMAF board at the 2019 General Assembly. Both sides are satisfied that the process was well executed, and that amateur MMA has been strengthened as a result. At board and administrative level, the merger has been successful with the two world governing bodies now fully integrated and unified in working towards our shared vision and goals. This unification can only bolster us in our battle for MMA to be recognised as a sport.

I would like to thank WMMAA founder Vadim Finkelchtein and IMMAF founders August Wallen and George Sallfeldt for their commitment to making this all possible. We are equally appreciative of the great efforts of both IMMAF's and WMMAA's National Federations towards successful national level affiliations; while we remain open to the return of federations that fell away due to challenges that were insurmountable at the time.

In 2020, IMMAF has engaged in a 360 independent review to certify the robustness of our structures and ensure that we meet the best international standards in good governance. IMMAF is already an Early Adopter of the Sport Integrity Global Alliance Standards, through which IMMAF submits to independent auditing by SIGA against integrity, good governance and financial integrity standards. IMMAF also, this year, moved its company registration from Sweden to Switzerland, the hub of international sport and home to the Olympic dream.

MEMBERS

In 2020, IMMAF pressed forward in its strategic drive to increase its membership, with IMMAF nations set to total 130 by October. Of these, over 45 are already recognised by their National Olympic Committee or National Sports Authority.



Kerrith Brown
IMMAF President

WELCOME

Our Membership Team has been providing enhanced support services to National Federations, in the wake of COVID-19 lockdowns, bolstered by expert consultancy from our expanded committees and commissions. During this time, the CEO and I have been attending regular online meetings with National Presidents for the creation of continental structures, and to address members' specific needs and issues.

REGULATION AND RECOGNITION

We were disappointed in June again when GAISF rejected IMMAF's application for sport recognition for a second time. Regardless, our application remains live for further review by GAISF and we have been adding new information to it as part of an ongoing process.

Meanwhile, IMMAF's legal case against the World Anti-Doping Agency is underway after the judge refused WADA's request, earlier this year, to postpone or halt it.

MMA won a breakthrough in France in January, when MMA was legalised and officially recognised under the auspices of the French Boxing Federation (FFB). IMMAF is working closely with the FFB, and the new French MMA Federation that sits beneath it, to establish standards and a national, regulatory framework for the sport, from amateur through to professional.

Meanwhile in Poland, IMMAF is supporting work with the Sports Minister to aid the national federation (MMA Polska) in attaining sport recognition.

EVENT CALENDAR

Our 2020 events calendar hit the rocks in April, from which time we were forced to postpone or cancel all further Championships, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant IMMAF held just one event in 2020 – the Oceania Open Championships – which was live streamed at IMMAF TV. The event saw a significant rise in the technical skill level of athletes, as well as increased publicity for amateur MMA in the region.

Hosting Rights Fees increased in 2019-2020, particularly for the Asian Open and Worlds, our most hotly competed for events among potential host nations. Special thanks is due to the Kazakhstan Mixed Martial Arts Federation for agreeing to move forward our Hosting Rights Agreements to 2021, along with their tremendous support.

We were saddened by the necessary postponement of the new World Team Championships, scheduled to be hosted by the Bahrain MMA Federation in December. I thank His Highness Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad al Khalifa, KHK President Shahid Mohammed and the BMAAF for their continued support.

2020 has been a disappointing year from a competition perspective, but we are looking forward to a full calendar in 2021, which we plan to kick off with in the second quarter. Besides the World Teams event, we are eyeing other competition formats including Grand Prix and Grand Slams.

STRUCTURE AND STRATEGIES

The pause on events and travel this year created time opportunity to review IMMAF structures and its committees and commissions, which underwent an overhaul and an expansion. IMMAF's reformed committees and commissions stand at 16 in number, with new ones such as the Women's Commission and Peace through MMA Commission broadening IMMAF's areas of development. We have been pleased to welcome industry-leading professionals into these expert, advisory roles and are hugely grateful for their generous donation of their time. The calibre of IMMAF's volunteer experts is a testimony to the significant achievements and good standing of IMMAF and its members. IMMAF additionally appointed consultants in key areas to support us in better managing our processes and to aid the CEO and board in thinking outside the box, so that we can continue to be cutting edge and a force to be reckoned with.

FINANCE

We continued to strive for financial self-sustainability and independence, despite commercial setbacks in 2020 caused by the pandemic and cancellation of events. Competition Hosting Rights are currently IMMAF's biggest commercial asset and we should be proud of the iconic, amateur competition platform and brand that we have developed. Other key areas marked for investment in 2021, to leverage untapped commercial opportunities, are Youth Development and Broadcast.



COMMUNICATIONS

We upped our communications on all levels in 2019-2020, refreshing the IMMAF brand, relaunching the website and hiring a Social Media Manager, professional photographers and content creators. The appointment to the new Marketing and Communications Committee of world experts in the field has helped up our game, alongside world class consultancy from new CSO Nick Davies. We have increased communications with our members during the lockdown period, keen to ensure everyone's safety and provide support through new policies and advice in these uncertain times. We tightened up our public relations through agreeing to a new Communications Policy.

SPONSORSHIP AND PARTNERS

It has been challenging to secure new sponsorship during 2020 due to the global situation, but we remain ever grateful to our longstanding commercial partners: UFC, Green Hill, Safejawz, Sportradar, MyNextMatch, Abingdon Advisory and new partner, Global Sports Technology. I am especially, personally grateful for the support given by Lawrence Epstein, Denitza Batchvarova and Dave Shaw at UFC and well as Jahangir Riaz at Green Hill. Not least would I also like to thank our integrity partners: Safe MMA, Peace and Sport, WADA ADeL and the Sport Integrity Global Alliance (SIGA).

DEVELOPMENT AND VISION

Despite all challenges, we have successfully managed in 2020 to build on the work of previous years in pursuit of our vision for Olympic recognition, which I truly believe we can achieve within the decade. Central to this vision is youth progression, and IMMAF's next focus is the development of training pathways for 4 to 11 year olds, as part of our plan for the establishment of a complete sport that runs all the way from ground zero.

CONCLUSION

I would like to thank the Presidents and Members of our National Federations for their unwavering support and ongoing belief, especially in the face of the adversity wrought by COVID-19.

My thanks goes to the board, the CEO, IMMAF staff and volunteers for their dedicated work and loyalty to the cause.

Again, I thank our former WMMAA counterparts for enabling the affiliation that was essential for our progress, and the 2019 Unified World Championships provided yet another milestone.

Yes – our journey has been difficult this year, but we have been afforded time for strategising, creative advancement and self-improvement. We have not slacked in our endeavour to meet the highest integrity standards, in line with the moral values of our sport. This has included the IMMAF CEO's work to improve diversity in sport, in response to the protests that shook the globe following the tragic killing of George Floyd in the United States. The fight against racism cannot be overlooked in our agenda: It falls within our responsibilities as leaders, both at national and international level, to decry and stamp out racism, along with all other forms of discrimination. The IMMAF global family will emerge from this period so much stronger and closer to our goal of sport recognition.

Kerrith Brown
IMMAF President



CEO REPORT

DEAR MEMBERS,

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned all of our lives upside down, and we have had to adapt how we live, work and play and get used to what will probably become a “new normal”.

The killing of George Floyd in May by U.S. police officers set off a wave of protests globally with the Black Lives Matters movement coming to prominence. Institutional racism is now under the microscope across all walks of life and sport does not get a free pass. The level of racism targeted at black footballers is on the rise, particularly in Europe. This saddens me because I thought this was something that we had left behind in the 1970's-80's. But the problem does not end there: The general underrepresentation of blacks in coaching and the boardrooms of sports remains shockingly low. So, when I was asked by the Sport Integrity Global Alliance (SIGA) to join their Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, I was proud to accept. Sports cannot take the high ground and claim to possess integrity, accountability and transparency when so many participants are marginalised based on their race, gender and disability. This is the opportunity for all of us who believe in fairness, fair play and a level playing field to get behind this cause.

EVENTS

IMMAF's calendar of events planned for 2020 was postponed and then cancelled once the severity of the virus became more evident. The Oceania Open Championships in March was the only event to survive, falling just before the global lockdown.

The Oceania Open was very successful, with a significant rise in female participation on previous years. We adopted a policy for all of our continental championships in 2020 that we would provide financial support to increase the participation of women athletes. This was to ensure that the women's divisions would go ahead and to provide



Densign White, MBE
IMMAF CEO

STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE



meaningful competition for the participants, especially those travelling long distances at their own expense to support these championships.

The World Championships that were planned for October 2020 in Nur Sultan have now been postponed to 2021 and we are very grateful to the Kazakhstan Mixed Martial Arts Federation for its continued support.

BOARD MEETINGS

The Board of Directors met in February for the first meeting of the year in Nur Sultan, Kazakhstan. We are very grateful to the Kazakhstan MMA Federation for hosting the board over four days of meetings, which included the endorsement of a Central Asian Commission and ratification of the Terms of Reference for IMMAF's new Commissions and post holders. The IMMAF board held further meetings (online) on the 20 July and the 23 September 2020.

COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

The calibre of people that have volunteered for our committees and commissions has been truly outstanding. I would like to personally register my thanks to those eighty-plus individuals who have volunteered their time and expertise to support our federation. The commissions will provide more impetus to our governance efforts and drive policy development in a variety of areas.

GAISF: GLOBAL ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL SPORTS FEDERATIONS

In February, we received a response from GAISF to our request for clarification about the meaning of the term 'compatibility' and why our alleged 'non-compatibility' presents an obstacle to

recognition. Other than informing us that there was a push back from other member combat sports, the situation remained opaque. We were invited to provide an explanation of the difference between MMA and other combat sports which we did within the deadline provided, and if I might say so, to a very high and professional level of presentation. I would like to express my thanks to Isobel Carnwath, IMMAF's Communications Director, and Dr. Nadim Nassif, Assistant Professor at the Notre Dame University – Louaize Baabdash, for their assistance on this project. Unfortunately, and without reasons given, we received notice in June that our application for Observer Status was once again declined. This has been a very demoralising process, especially when we read frequently of other less well-developed federations being accepted by GAISF and WADA, for signatory status. Nevertheless, we will fight on until justice is done.

IMMAF PETITION

To raise awareness about the injustice of the GAISF and WADA decisions not to recognise MMA, we started an online petition to promote and gain support for our case for recognition. We are grateful to our National Federations and the many individuals who supported the campaign to push signatures to the petition to 20,000. It is very important that every IMMAF federation engages with this effort. If we all raise this case with our contacts within National Olympic Committees and Sports Ministries, it will have an impact. We will not give up this fight and we need to keep chipping away until we achieve our mission. We know from our conversations with GAISF and WADA that they do notice and follow these campaigns. They are not happy about it, but neither are we that they discriminate against us and run their business like a closed-shop, trade union.

WORLD ANTI-DOPING AGENCY (WADA)

The WADA court case, which has been in process for more than two years, was stalled by the closure of the Swiss courts in response to the Coronavirus. We have recently heard from our legal representatives that the next court hearing will take place in October or November of this year. In the meantime, there has been movement within WADA with the appointment of a new President, Mr. Witold Banka, former Sports Minister for Poland. WADA has developed a new Code, which they plan to introduce from January 2021. It is our hope that the new Code will grant WADA independence in its decision-making from the politics of GAISF and the IOC.

FRANCE

The fight to legalise MMA in France was won and this will help our case for wider recognition. The French Sports Ministry ultimately granted responsibility for the governance of MMA to the French Boxing Federation (FFB). However, it had been a strange contrast to see how many different combat sports bid to take on MMA, including the federations of Muay Thai, karate, kickboxing and wrestling, while the international representatives of these same sports are the parties blocking the recognition of MMA by GAISF.

The FFB have made a very good start in formulating the sports code for MMA in France and are working co-operatively with IMMAF to ensure that they are aligned as much as possible with IMMAF regulations. The current set up under boxing, as decided by the sports ministry, is intended as temporary until the French MMA Federation has been developed to the point where it can become a stand-alone Federation.

Our Director Bertrand Amoussou deserves much credit for this success for which he has fought for over a decade. The UFC and FTI Consulting have

also been instrumental in the legalisation of MMA in France, committing huge human and financial resources to breaking the deadlock. IMMAF should also be proud of the part we have played. The President and I attended many meetings in Paris with the Sports Ministry and other stakeholders. It became crystal clear from these meetings, that political decision-makers were far more interested in the amateur and grassroots development of the sport and what MMA has to offer to young people in the communities than in the professional sport. The work that the IMMAF team has carried out over the past five years with the development of the progression scheme, coaches' and officials' education, the competition handbook, medical protocol and anti-doping, among other achievements, is impressive. I believe that this was the persuasive and deciding factor in changing minds in France, demonstrating that MMA is a safe sport for all and of educational value.

This victory validates my earlier comment about chipping away at regulatory organs such as GAISF, who have previously used the MMA ban in France as a justification for rejecting our applications.

GOVERNANCE AUDIT

In July, the board of Directors agreed to an external independent audit of the entire organisation of IMMAF. This was a complete 360-degree examination of our federation's structures, looking at the board, senior management team, committees and commissions, financial management and controls and policies, in terms of best practice. Feedback was also collated from member federations.

Considering that we are a relatively young organisation, the result of the audit was very positive. There were twenty-five recommendations in areas in which we need to improve, and I have already put a small task force together to carry out this work with me.

In addition to improving our processes, another purpose of the audit was to measure how we rank in comparison to other recognised federations within ASOIF (the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations), who recently released the results of their members' self-assessment audit. On that questionnaire, where the maximum score possible is 200, we scored below 100. Although I am disappointed with that, we should not be too discouraged: once the twenty-five recommendations from the main audit are completed, we will be easily ranked among the scores of the best governed sports. It is important to remember how young we are as a federation, and we do not have the human and financial resources of long established, IOC-funded organisations.

YOUTH AND TODDLER DEVELOPMENT

In 2019, IMMAF held its inaugural Youth World Championships for youths aged from 12 to 17 years, in Rome. This was a massive success with almost 300 participants from 25 countries.



Unfortunately, we are not able to hold this event again in 2020 because of the Coronavirus pandemic. However, in our event planning for 2021 we had been holding positive, high level discussions with the Las Vegas Convention Centre whose management were enthusiastic about hosting our youth worlds during UFC Fight Week in July. Unfortunately, with the rise in infection rates in the United States and restrictions imposed on foreign travel there, it is looking more unlikely that this event will happen in Las Vegas in 2021. We will however be looking at alternative locations and keep you informed as the situation develops.

The IMMAF Board approved the creation of the Youth Commission, so that this area of focus does not get lost amongst the myriad of other developmental activities. We are very keen to see our federations become more engaged with the development of youth and young children through MMA. We are now working on the progression scheme to make it more child friendly and we want to develop educational tools adapted for coaches working with children as young as 4 years old. There is no successful sports federation that I know of that does not rely on children as its mass participants. This is the strategy for growing the sport and generating membership revenues for the federations. We want all of our members to dedicate their time, focus and resources to this task which will pay back with dividends.

CONCLUSION

As you read this annual report you will, I hope, gain a sense of how much work has been carried out by the senior management team of IMMAF despite the challenges presented by the pandemic. The team has continued to work relentlessly, and it fills me with pride to lead this incredible group of people.

In conclusion, I want to thank the IMMAF Board of Directors for their continued support and the President Kerrith Brown, who is tireless in his ambition to deliver our mission to make MMA a recognised, world class sport, with IMMAF as its global flag bearer. Without our sponsors we could not be where we are today, and so I want to thank Greenhill and Safejawz.

I am also grateful to our main sponsor UFC, who has given unwavering support to us throughout every trial and tribulation. In particular, I want to thank Ms. Deni Batchvarova (UFC Senior Vice-President of Strategy and IMMAF Non-Executive Director), Ike Lawrence Epstein (UFC Senior Executive Vice-President and COO), Dave Shaw (UFC Senior Vice-President of International and Content) and Dave Lewis (UFC Senior Vice-president of International Events, Operations and Regulatory affairs).



Densign White, MBE
IMMAF CEO



STRATEGY AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT



Nick Davies
IMMAF CSO

The IMMAF Chief Strategy Officer (CSO) role was created by the IMMAF Board to help IMMAF formulate, facilitate and communicate IMMAF's strategic initiatives and future goals. The scope of work includes supporting the IMMAF Leadership team with strategic PR counsel, maintaining optimum communications with Member Federations and other external stakeholders, and providing counsel and network/contacts for the international relations campaign (GAISF/IOC recognition). In addition, the CSO takes responsibility for special projects or missions.

In February 2020 the IMMAF Board created a taskforce to investigate the feasibility of setting up a separate IMMAF Commercial company, as a way to address the first priority of the IMMAF 2017-21 Strategic Plan which is, "to become financially self-sustainable". Much useful and detailed work was completed by the relevant departments of IMMAF and a detailed presentation was made to the Board in the summer of 2020. However, due to the uncertain economic climate caused by COVID-19, the Board agreed to re-shift focus onto the creation of a new IMMAF Strategic Plan 2021-2023, within which a plan to develop commercial assets played a central role.

This new Strategic Plan, which was finalised in October 2020, will guide IMMAF to achieve the following strategic goals:

1. Financial independence and security
2. Best in class governance structure
3. Formal Recognition as a sport. (GAISF, WADA, IOC...)
4. Grow the sport of amateur MMA internationally

Commercial development is crucial to IMMAF's continued growth. This includes developing assets and ensuring focus on:

- Competitions, Commercial, Development, Governance, Participation, Athletes
- IMMAF income vital to build IMMAF's financial reserves – 1 year's operating expenses within three years
- Generation of Host City Fees is a number one priority
- An over-arching IMMAF Insurance Plan is needed
- Lobbying and renewed PR effort
- Membership drive – "quality over quantity"
- Redefine IMMAF's offer – What are the benefits of membership?
- IT budget for platforms including all IMMAF data storage: own/store all IMMAF data on own platform; sell competition equipment via E-commerce platform; and maximise potential of App and Membership Reward card
- Better Video Content for all IMMAF Events to increase value
- Begin to sell: marketing/sponsorship of IMMAF assets

While the finished Strategic Plan will be available soon on the IMMAF website, here are examples of how IMMAF will develop some of its assets:

IMMAF CHAMPIONSHIP HOSTING RIGHTS

Hosting rights fees from IMMAF Tier 1 Championships will underpin the commercial development of the organisation. We plan to set a competition calendar three-years in advance to guarantee fixed income. The new IMMAF Championship Bid Commission will play a key advisory role, providing policy frameworks and documentation to the IMMAF President and his team.

IMMAF VIDEO CONTENT

Video content is integral to the growth of IMMAF, across many areas, and the priority will be to invest in:

- Specialists to activate and manage the content
- Infrastructure for speed and efficiency of delivery
- Higher quality production and greater volume of output (short form clips/news access/live/archive)
- Secure content storage via cloud system
- Front end content management system
- Social content creation resource



COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS REPORT

In 2020, the IMMAF Administration is assisted in its work by a number of Committees (elected by the General Assembly) and Commissions (appointed by the Board of Directors), made up of expert advisers coming from within and outside the sport of MMA. All volunteers with different backgrounds, nationalities and skill sets, they bring a wealth of different experience and are committed to making IMMAF an outstanding example of good governance and athlete-oriented sport development.

The Anti-Doping, Anti-Doping Disciplinary, Arbitration, Disciplinary, Financial Audit and Nominations Committees were elected by the General Assembly in 2019 while, starting in 2020, no fewer than eight new Commissions have been appointed by the IMMAF Board in addition to the well-established Coaching Commission, Medical Commission and Regulatory Affairs Commission.

Covering every aspect of governance in sport, the new commissions are:

- Athletes' Commission
- Business Development Commission
- Communications and Marketing Commission
- Competition Bidding Commission
- Ethics Commission
- Peace Through MMA Commission
- Women's Commission
- Youth Development Commission

Despite COVID-19 curtailing physical meetings, virtual technology has allowed each team to get together regularly and to energetically pursue the Action Plan approved by the IMMAF Board at the beginning of 2020.

As well as ongoing efforts to ensure that IMMAF Policies and Regulations are constantly reviewed and updated, there have also been examples of new initiatives.

The new IMMAF Women's Commission has pushed to launch National Women's MMA Commissions in 8 countries: Ireland, England, Spain, Panama, Columbia, Congo, Cameroon and India. It has launched a survey to identify the main obstacles to female participation in MMA and gather women's ideas on how the sport could be made more appealing to them as participants.

Another example comes from IMMAF's newest Commission, the "Peace through MMA" Commission which aims to harness sport to mitigate violence and engender peace. It focuses on developing programmes to socially benefit young people by tackling the issues that affect them and helping to build their resilience and a positive future for them and their communities.

In addition, the newly created Marketing and Communications Commission has focused on developing platforms to improve connectivity between IMMAF and National Federations as well as encouraging the development of a new generation of MMA journalists via an IMMAF mentoring and education programme.



IMMAF COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS: 2020 ACTION PLANS

ANTI-DOPING COMMITTEE

The role of the Anti-Doping Committee is to ensure that IMMAF meets its obligations as an International Federation in the fight against doping in sport. The Committee will work with the IMMAF Anti-Doping Adviser to create a Strategic Plan and recommend resources for Anti-Doping for approval by IMMAF.

2020 PRIORITIES:

- Produce a policy update for the IMMAF Board on current Anti-Doping policies/procedures at IMMAF – recommendations for improvements
- Produce a summary update of WADA policies and future strategies as it may impact IMMAF
- Review current IMMAF Anti-Doping procedures and guidelines – recommend improvements
- Update and document IMMAF doping related case management process/personnel

ANTI-DOPING DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

The role of the Anti-doping Disciplinary Committee is to manage and resolve any asserted Anti-Doping Rule Violation or other dispute arising from the implementation of those rules, policies and procedures arising from the Results Management Process.

2020 PRIORITIES:

- Ensure the necessary procedures are in place in advance of any doping related case in co-operation with the Anti-doping Committee
- Brief members of Committee on IMMAF Doping related case management process
- Manage cases and ensure that all reporting procedures respect WADA guidelines
- Build relationships with the chair and staff liaison of the IMMAF Arbitration Panel and relevant WADA representatives

ARBITRATION COMMITTEE

The IMMAF Arbitration Committee should be considered as an independent entity. The IMMAF Arbitration Committee has the exclusive role to resolve complaints and disputes and appeals arising from decisions of the IMMAF Disciplinary Committee, and complaints and disputes related to decisions of the IMMAF Anti-doping Disciplinary Committee.

2020 PRIORITIES:

- Review current procedures, rules and guidelines related to IMMAF related disputes and amend if necessary
- Manage cases and ensure that all procedures respect relevant rules and guidelines

- Build relationships with the chairs/staff liaisons of the IMMAF Disciplinary Committee and Anti-Doping disciplinary Committee
- When the new IMMAF Statutes are in place, create a pool of Arbitrators to handle cases (ensuring a wide range of skills and expertise as well as international and gender balance)

ATHLETES' COMMISSION

The Athletes' Commission serves as a link between the athletes and IMMAF. The IMMAF Athletes' Commission ensures that the athletes' viewpoint remains at the heart of all decisions by IMMAF and encourages and empowers the athletes' voice in all matters related to Amateur MMA globally.

2020 PRIORITIES:

- Create a practical procedure to ensure representatives of the Athletes' Commission are consulted on IMMAF policy making for medical/health, safeguarding, technical and rule changes, coaching, event organisation, PR and Marketing, etc
- Propose ways to ensure Athletes support IMMAF efforts to promote sport (IMMAF Awards – ongoing social media campaigns etc)
- Give advice regarding the creation of a new IMMAF "grand slam" type global circuit
- Create a policy paper advising how best to handle the transition between amateur and professional

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The role of the IMMAF Business Development Commission is to develop strategies, processes and activities to foster commercial growth opportunities for IMMAF (including but not limited to partnership, sponsorship and hosting opportunities) and to promote and encourage active business development amongst IMMAF National Member Federations. The Business Commission should aim to create long term value or a long term positive image of IMMAF in the minds of current and potential commercial partners, stakeholders, and relevant markets.

2020 PRIORITIES:

- Develop a Strategic Plan to identify and attract high quality and appropriate commercial candidates for IMMAF commercial agreement (both for IMMAF and for IMMAF Competitions and other events)
- Supply the IMMAF President and relevant IMMAF Staff with specific introductions to potential commercial partners and support during negotiations
- Liaise with the IMMAF Communications and Marketing Commission to create and update information and sales material relevant to Commercial Partner negotiations



- Define and communicate processes and resources to help ensure the retention of IMMAF Commercial Partners

COACHING COMMISSION

The role of the Coaching Commission is to advise IMMAF Board of Directors on matters related to Amateur Mixed Martial Arts from the coaches' perspective including providing strategic direction and leadership to ensure that IMMAF coaches have the most up-to-date level of competency and can deliver effective teaching of the skills of mixed martial arts to their membership. The Commission will provide a coach's perspective and voice to the decision-making processes within IMMAF and advocate for the rights and interests of coaches within the sport of Amateur Mixed Martial Arts globally.

2020 PRIORITIES:

- Finalise content for different levels of the IMMAF Coaches' Education programme
- Establish strategic target lists for deliverables of IMMAF's programme in 2020
- Prepare policy paper regarding procedure for coaching of youth MMA, in association with the Youth Development Commission
- Prepare paper on the Progression Scheme (adult as well as youth)
- Advise on coaches' position regarding development of IMMAF Kids MMA programmes
- Promote and support the establishment of Coaching Commissions in Area Associations and Member Federations to provide a coaches' perspective into their respective decision-making processes

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING COMMISSION

The role of the Communications and Marketing Commission is to advise the IMMAF Board of Directors and Communications Director on issues related to communications and marketing, in both a strategic and operational capacity, to ensure that the IMMAF values and activities, as well as the IMMAF vision and mission, are promoted to a global audience. The Commission will help to ensure that IMMAF, as the legitimate global governing body for Mixed Martial Arts, has a clear brand, communications and consumer marketing strategy to amplify IMMAF's vision and mission.

2020 PRIORITIES:

- Develop innovative communications activities to engage people around the world, particularly young people, in the mission and values of IMMAF
- Improve the internal communications to IMMAF NFs of IMMAF related information and news
- Devise 2020 Strategic Plan for lobbying/ PR campaign related to GAISF/WADA/IOC recognition
- Devise plan to kick-start local ticket selling strategy at IMMAF Events

- Update Communication and Marketing Tools (including presentation decks) and advise on best practice in terms of procurement
- Seek advice from global experts in the fields of marketing, communications, advertising and digital media, including from IMMAF Partners, Sponsors and Broadcast partners, to enhance IMMAF practice
- Create templates of best practice to help upskill IMMAF National Federations

COMPETITION BIDDING

The role of the Competition Bidding Commission is to identify and attract high quality and appropriate candidates to host IMMAF competitions. The Commission will develop and manage all the relevant information and guidelines to inform potential candidates of the benefits and responsibilities of hosting IMMAF events. The Commission will also ensure that the necessary evaluation and decision-making processes, as well as communication with prospective candidates, is handled in the most transparent manner possible and in full compliance with the IMMAF Statutes, Code of Ethics and other relevant IMMAF rules and guidelines.

2020 PRIORITIES:

- Create a Strategic Plan that can identify and attract high quality and appropriate candidates to host future IMMAF competitions
- Manage and update all the relevant information, guidelines and bid books to inform potential candidates of the benefits and responsibilities of hosting IMMAF events
- Work closely with potential and successful candidates to ensure compliance with the IMMAF Bid Process and Hosting guidelines
- Develop methodology to engage with Local Authorities and Tourism bodies
- Ensure that procedures and documentation related to the evaluation and decision-making processes, as well as communication with prospective candidates, is handled in full compliance with IMMAF Statutes, Code of Ethics and other relevant IMMAF rules and guidelines, as well as best practice of International Sport Federations

DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

The role of the IMMAF Disciplinary Committee is to manage and resolve any asserted violations of the IMMAF Code of Ethics and other IMMAF Rules and Procedures, except for asserted violations of Anti-Doping rules which will come under the jurisdiction of a separate IMMAF Anti-Doping Disciplinary Committee. Any complaints, disputes or appeals arising from decisions of the IMMAF Disciplinary Committee will be settled by the IMMAF Arbitration Panel which is a separate body independent of the Disciplinary Committee.



2020 PRIORITIES:

- Ensure the necessary procedures are in place in advance of any disciplinary related cases in co-operation with the IMMAF CEO
- Brief members of Committee on IMMAF case management process
- Manage cases and ensure that all reporting procedures respect IMMAF rules and guidelines
- Build relationships with the chair and staff liaison of the IMMAF Arbitration Panel and relevant CAS representatives

ETHICS COMMISSION

The role of the Ethics Commission is to advise the CEO and Board on the development, implementation and review of organisational procedures and policies guidelines relating to ethical issues; and whom the CEO can call upon to provide advice and consultation to the IMMAF – WMMAA on ethics matters depending on the issues arising. The Ethics Commission is responsible for ensuring that IMMAF – WMMAA acts in accordance with its Statutes and Policies including its Conflicts of Interest and whistleblowing policies. The Commission is responsible for the investigation of complaints at the request of the IMMAF CEO.

2020 Priorities:

- To review and update current IMMAF procedures/documents related to:
 - Code of Ethics
 - Medical Ethics (in and out of competition)
 - Safeguarding
 - Conflicts of Interest
 - Commercial policy/procedures
- To review and remain up-to-date with “best practice” of Ethics policy in other sport and non-sport, non-profit and commercial entities
- To provide advice and support to other IMMAF Committees and Commissions
- To oversee/uphold the values of IMMAF as an organisation and ensure that procedures/policies remain relevant and appropriate
- To seek out 2020 opportunities for Ethics Committee representatives to participate in public events on Ethics’ theme

FINANCIAL AUDIT

The role of the Financial Audit Committee, which should be considered as independent of IMMAF, is to oversee and audit the financial activities of IMMAF and to provide independent oversight of financial matters related to IMMAF.

2020 Priorities:

- To review internal audit of IMMAF accounts prior to departure to external financial auditors
- Chair to attend meeting of IMMAF with auditors to provide independent oversight (Jan-Feb 2020)
- To provide check and balance for “big ticket” spending at IMMAF World Championships and for planned new events



MEDICAL

The role of the Medical Commission is to advise IMMAF Board of Directors on matters related to Amateur Mixed Martial Arts from the medical perspective. This includes: advising the Board on IMMAF medical policies; making recommendations to maintain safe medical standards; and advising the Board on the latest outcomes from medical research and developments in sports medical practice related to mixed martial arts.

2020 Priorities:

- Create a rota to ensure that at least one member of the Medical Commission is available as consultant/medical delegate at IMMAF events in coordination with the IMMAF CEO
- Provide an ongoing review and update of medical processes for IMMAF competitions, through the Event Operations Manual and other literature, as well as in practice
- Create and activate a system to ensure that medical data is collected and reported at end of each IMMAF Competition for research purposes
- Collate and manage statistics on injuries from each IMMAF Competition for research purposes
- Make recommendations to improve athlete welfare in amateur MMA
- Consult and liaise with medical professionals, bodies and other entities within mixed martial arts and from other sports, including other Medical Commissions
- Develop educational programmes and materials aimed at improving medical safety in the sport of amateur MMA

MMA FOR PEACE COMMISSION

Terms of Reference and Priorities for 2021 being finalised.

REGULATORY AFFAIRS

The role of the Regulatory Affairs Commission is to develop universal protocols for safe Amateur MMA competition, developing and managing rules and regulations, and providing technical and safety guidelines for the sport.

2020 Priorities:

- Develop new progression pathways and education for officials of different levels (National, Continental and Global) with a transparent promotion (and regulation) system
- Devise objective and transparent systems to get feedback and evaluate the performance of judges and officials at IMMAF events
- Develop mandatory Officials’ Seminars (at least one per year) for Continents, with one international Seminar each year for top level of officials
- Review and update programme content for Regulatory Affairs, MMA conferences and courses
- Encourage and support national projects within the IMMAF Family to promote best practice in Regulatory Affairs

WOMEN'S

The role of the Women's Commission is to advise the IMMAF Board of Directors on the development and implementation of an IMMAF women and sport policy, and to promote equal opportunities for girls and women to participate in, and benefit from, amateur mixed martial arts as a sport and physical activity.

2020 Priorities:

- Develop an IMMAF women in sport strategy
- Promote the creation of Women Commissions at National Federation level
- Help increase participation of women athletes, coaches, referees and other officials in amateur MMA and in leadership positions within the IMMAF Family
- Promote MMA as a tool for gender equality and empowerment and to raise awareness of harassment and abuse in MMA and in sport
- Support the development of women's skills in management and leadership within the IMMAF Family, including through training, seminars, workshops and mentoring
- Recognise the achievements of individuals and organisations promoting women in MMA (amateur and professional)

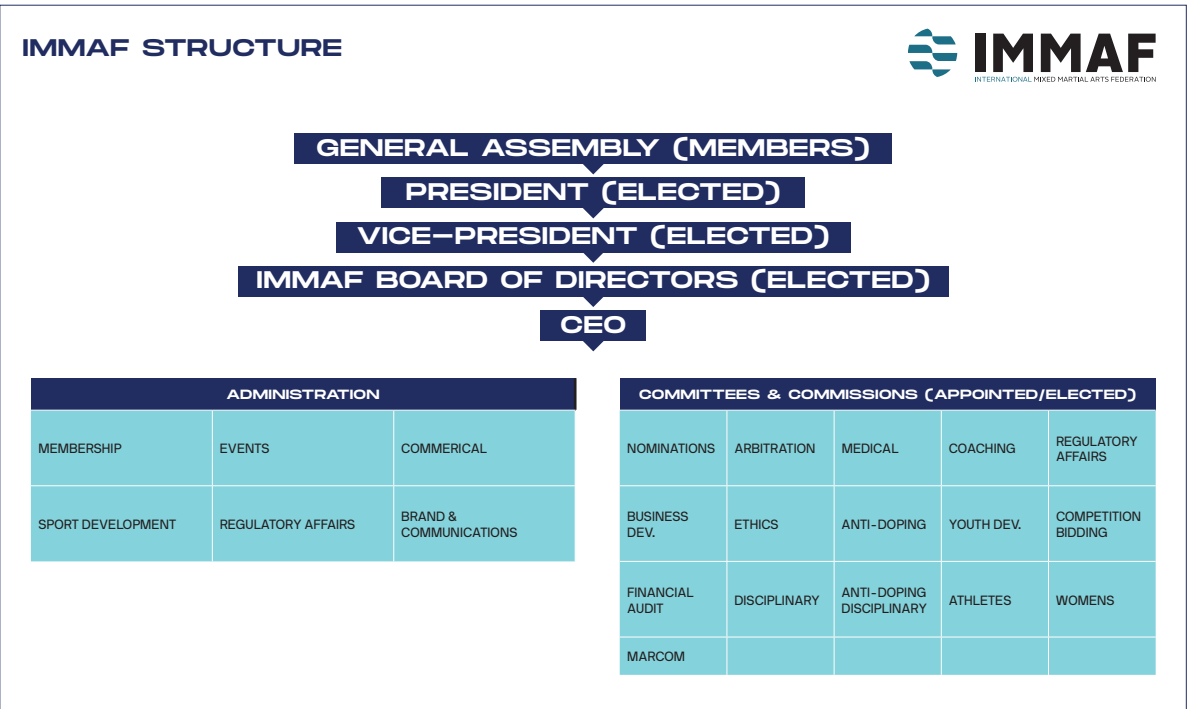
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The role of the Youth Development Commission is to oversee programmes to guide young athletes on appropriate pathways for lifelong participation, competition preparation and personal development in the sport of MMA. The Commission will ensure that training pathways are created for all officials that adhere to the accepted concept of “Long term Athlete Development” (LTAD).

In addition, because young athlete development frameworks need to be holistic and embrace the complex nature of athlete development, this Committee will cover Coaching, Regulatory affairs, Medical, Anti-Doping and Ethics.

2020 Priorities:

- Develop a concrete IMMAF Youth Development strategy
- Develop specific rules for youth MMA competitions with Regulatory Affairs Commission
- Advise other relevant commissions on medical/safeguarding issues related to MMA
- Develop a specific PR/promotion campaign with the Communications/Marketing Commission
- Develop specific safety procedures/protocols for Youth and IMMAF Youth Championships
- Advise the IMMAF Event Management team on appropriate operational systems for IMMAF Youth Events
- Produce age appropriate resources, content, and teaching modules to promote youth MMA



MEMBERSHIP



Gosha Malik

Member Relations Manager



Jorden Curran

Member Development Consultant

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The year 2020 commenced with fantastic results from **Membership Services'** previous years' work with the recognition of MMA in **France, French Polynesia and the Dominican Republic**. IMMAF President Kerrith Brown, during his official visits to each country, assured Ministers and national leaders of the sporting values embodied by MMA. It was apparent that governmental organisations required education about the specifics of the sport, its values and the wider contribution it can make to a nation's youth development and communities.

During a meeting between the **French Polynesian Federation of Wrestling, MMA and Associated Disciplines** and Minister Christells Lehartel, questions were asked about the practice of MMA, including the MMA ring, which is the most commonly questioned aspect of our sport. Our role is to explain that it's a necessity to ensure the safety of practising athletes. A new decree was issued on 5 January 2020 recognising MMA in **French Polynesia** under the leadership of Hiro Lemaire, President of the new National Governing Body.

The **Dominican Republic Federation of Mixed Martial Arts**, under Manuel Pagan's leadership, built the structure for a National Federation and was granted individual membership by the IMMAF Board of Directors. Manuel Pagan proved dedicated to his mission to show the Ministry of Sport that good governance and sport development was taking place in the country. The National

Championships were attended by President Kerrith Brown and demonstrated skilled national talent and a good standard of medical protocols. The event resulted in the national governing body receiving government recognition.

In the nations that have welcomed IMMAF affiliated national governing bodies, MMA's rules and technical elements have become understood, not only by the MMA community, but by fans, medical professionals, journalists and business stakeholders. National leaders and stakeholders have been educated about the IMMAF Unified Amateur Rules and thus have been able to make the distinction between amateur and professional competition. The structure required of new federations is now clearly established, as is the importance of building skilled boards that can assist the organisations in achieving their goals.

IMMAF's membership team actively supports new members with guidelines and resources that have been developed over the last few years. The adoption of progression pathways by coaches has been an early priority for each country. Federations in **Latin America** took exceptional advantage of using the scheme during this year's pandemic. Online education reached its highest peak to-date this year. Coaches and athletes stranded at home under lockdown restrictions jumped at the opportunity to study online. In order to present opportunities for progression during these difficult times, the online module of

the Coaches Course was adapted by Director of Development Andrew Moshanov to a Module 1 and made available free of charge to all IMMAF members.

WADA introduced its new ADeL platform offering courses for athletes, coaches, parents, medical professionals, officials and administrators. National Federations under IMMAF welcomed with enthusiasm the opportunity of learning what to expect from Anti-Doping compliance and the WADA standards that IMMAF complies with. The ADeL course mirrors IMMAF practices and WADA recommendations. Up to 70 members weekly took the course during the weeks of lockdown. NGB Presidents proudly shared their certificates with the MMA world and social media followers.

The 2020 global pandemic has shaken the worlds of business, family and sport. Notably, the Tokyo 2020 Olympics were postponed and athletes around the globe felt the impact on their wellbeing. National Federations had to take a stand on implementing procedures for athletes' return to training with respect to COVID-19. IMMAF provided a recommendation to members and morally supported them as much as possible. A President's "Get Together" project was introduced to IMMAF members: after a successful pilot with representatives from Latin American countries, all National Federations were divided into groups according to geographic time zone and language, with translation provided. For example, respective meetings were held for English and French speaking African federations. It was decided to address no more than two subjects per meeting, important to the national development of MMA.

The first meetings highlighted the need to document member data in each Federation, such as number of affiliated clubs, coaches and practitioners. It is a well-known fact that MMA stakeholders have failed to tally the figures of MMA practitioners nationally. We are aware of figures being as high as hundreds of thousands, but this cannot be more than an educated guess without the empirical evidence. Athletes are known to train in MMA classes and take part in competitions but are not registered as members of the National Federation. Currently, the only registration taking place is of competitors at National Championships or of coaches via the IMMAF Grading App. The latter should be a higher priority since only a limited number of athletes take part in National Championships, and these numbers do not account for recreational participation. Ideally, National Federations should be requiring that all affiliated gyms collate participation data, including age, gender and ethnicity statistics, while complying with data protection laws. Every mainstream or recognised sport such as football, archery, athletics, badminton, billiards, boxing and bridge requires membership information from its National Federations. MMA should be no different. Acquiring MMA participation and membership data on a global scale is a priority for the remainder of 2020.

The summer of 2020 saw IMMAF usher in services to support National Federations at an even deeper level, introducing them to the vital policies outlined within the national youth and sport policies of their respective government ministries and sport authorities. Many Federation presidents were not yet aware of their government having published a national strategy for sport and its role in the community or were yet to read the literature. The benefits of working towards meeting national policy targets include creating community impact, greater chance of sport recognition and funding opportunities.

To aid this further, the Member Services team drafted the guidance document, 'MMA For All', taking universal elements of sport for development from several world governments and adapting it to an IMMAF/MMA context. This included example KPIs and working models with which to help IMMAF members plan, present and effectively link community work as NGBs to the community objectives of their government.

The MMA For All guidance includes:

- Introduction: Vision of IMMAF
- Identifying universal community outcomes
- Positive Federation habits for social and community development
- Identifying areas of intervention
- Local collaboration and partnerships
- Event legacy
- Action models
- Areas of investment and investment principles
- Making a difference and impressing government

Member Services has identified nations, which do not currently house an identified MMA body or member Federation. We have started contacting government sport authorities and identifying national stakeholders, to introduce IMMAF and propose assistance in the establishment of a National Governing Body. The introductory document, 'Why IMMAF', was developed for IMMAF and its members to present to government officials, stakeholders or potential partners in order to convey IMMAF's primary work efforts, its core values, messages and objectives.

Following the rejection of IMMAF's application to GAISF, Member Services conducted a fresh audit of IMMAF's application files including membership, Anti-Doping and medical documents, in order to identify and swiftly address any areas of potential discredit. Following the review, several members were contacted for further documentation with which to better evidence their national recognition status.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: AFRICA

This year started positively with board meetings in Kazakhstan and for us, in Africa, with the planning of the IMMAF Africa Open that should have been held in Sandton, South Africa, at the EFC Performance Institute facility. At that time, we could not have fathomed the devastating effect that the COVID-19 situation was to have around the world. In Africa, as in many other countries, we experienced mass job loss and therefore millions of people struggling to make ends meet. Global restrictions forced the cancellation of the Africa Open in 2020 and the postponement of the arrangement with the EFC Performance Institute to 2021.

In **South Africa**, lockdown restrictions slowed the progress of coaches' education: we have only been able to start teaching again as of 1 September in accordance with social distancing guidelines. **Mixed Martial Arts South Africa's (MMASA)** coaches are currently at Level 2 and moving towards Level 1. Competitions have been prohibited, but MMASA is planning to kick off again with its return tournament on 3 October 2020. We are excited to get the athlete's competing again and the event will be live streamed by Alpha MMA.

In other significant news, **MMASA** has undergone a change in leadership. Bertus Coetzee resigned as President and I took up the reigns, with Ferdinand Basson becoming Vice-President and Jason Brown, CEO. At time of the writing, the rest of the board are yet to be announced. My vision has been to create a board for MMASA that is similarly structured to IMMAF's. Although MMASA oversees both professional and amateur MMA, IMMAF's structure provides a perfect template to work from. We have already made changes and they will be presented to MMASA's members at the AGM in October 2020.

Beyond South Africa, there have been positive developments across the continent in 2020: President Guy Bertrand Olomo secured a government mandate for the **National League of Mixed Martial Arts Cameroon (NLMMAC)** to act as **Cameroon's** sole governing body for MMA. This was in response to attempts by a GAMMA affiliated kick-boxing federation to sabotage



Raymond Phillips

Regional Director for Africa



NLMMAF's relationship with the government and to assert its authority over the sport. Sadly, this is not an isolated incident on the IMMAF world stage. Meanwhile, **Mixed Martial Arts Federation Mauritius**, under the leadership of Avinash Ramtohol, has earned positive interest from government authorities. A development plan has been prepared for the sport there, which can be used as a model for other African countries. In **Congo**, coaches' courses are being implemented by the **Democratic Republic of Congo MMA Federation (DRCMMAF)** and a women's commission has been

formed. Here, as in several African countries, national activities were not stopped because of the pandemic. Also in 2020, the **Nigerian Mixed Martial Arts Federation** notably accelerated the growth of its clubs' membership.

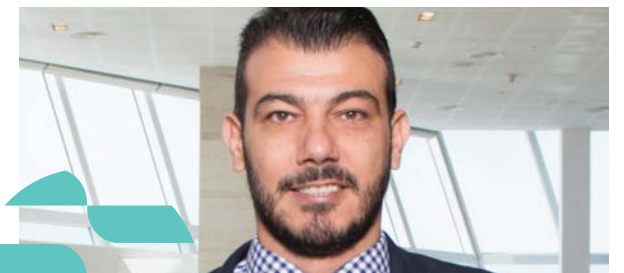
Building on these developments, we are looking forward to seeing everything normalise as soon as possible across the world, so that we can continue to work together towards our MMA dreams at full-steam.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: ASIA

I am really happy to see how much the Asian continent is contributing to the evolution of MMA as a sport worldwide. IMMAF can boast huge activity in Asia in 2020, including the following:

- IMMAF's 2019 Senior and Junior World Championship tournaments took place at Khalifa Sport City over five days in **Bahrain**, last November, hosted by the **Bahrain Mixed Martial Arts Federation** under the Bahrain Olympic Committee
- IMMAF's Board of Directors met on 7-8 February in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, to formulate policy and approve action plans for 2020
- IMMAF was pleased to welcome a new member from **Uzbekistan** (under Observation status), the **Uzbekistan MMA Association**
- A Central Asian Commission was formed, made up of National Federations from **Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan**
- The postponed IMMAF Asian Open Championships will be taking place at the state of the art Palace of Combat and Martial Arts in Nur-Sultan **Kazakhstan** in 2021
- The 2020 IMMAF World Championships was set to take place in **Kazakhstan** and the first world National MMA Team Championship was also set to take place in **Bahrain**. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, both have been postponed to 2021
- **Abu Dhabi – UAE** became the capital of MMA worldwide when UFC hosted three huge events on Yas Island.
- **BRAVE CF**, **Bahrain's** household MMA Promotion, is continuing to hold events around the world, having reached 20 countries in less than 4 years of operation

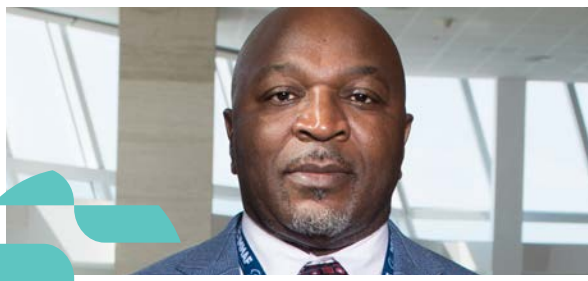
The potential the Asian continent has to offer the sport of MMA is huge and it is great to see Asian heroes on the world stage and topping the IMMAF rankings: two Asian nations are ranked among the Top three senior national teams in IMMAF's Amateur MMA Rankings in 2020, with **Bahrain** taking the #1 spot and **Kazakhstan**, #3. In the Junior National Team rankings, **Kazakhstan** places #2, **Bahrain** #5 and **Japan** #10.



Wissam Abi Nader
Regional Director for Asia

EUROPE: FRANCE IN FOCUS

Everyone will remember 2020 as the year the world stopped spinning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. MMA fans and stakeholders in France will also remember it as the year that the state, through its sports ministry, decided to legalise MMA, ending more than 15 years of talks. The governmental process consisted of asking all martial arts and combat sports federations interested in housing the formative MMA federation to present a 4-year proposal for the structuring of the discipline. Ultimately, based on review and advice from an independent jury, the Sports Minister decided to grant the guardianship of MMA to the French Boxing Federation on January 21, 2020.



Bertrand Amoussou
Board Director

This announcement not only had an impact in France but also internationally, rewarding the long efforts of the CFMMA (Commission Française de Mixed Martial Arts) and its delegates. France will now be a place that can host the biggest MMA events and, why not, in the near-future an IMMAF international championship?

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: EUROPE

EUROPE: 2020 HIGHLIGHTS OVERVIEW

The continent where IMMAF was born and resides saw an array of developments across its 43 member nations, in a year that also saw the company move its registration from Sweden to Switzerland – home of the Olympic movement.

FIGMMA was set to host the European Championships in Italy, for a second time, but plans were cancelled due to the rapid spread of the Coronavirus and ensuing lockdowns. Now the country has opened up again to competitions, FIGMMA has organised with Bellator for an IMMAF rules amateur match to take place on its forthcoming undercard in Italy, as a first.

In Germany, COVID-19 restrictions have recently relaxed allowing the German MMA Federation (GEMMAF) to conduct its National Championships behind closed doors. The federation is notably going from strength to strength, particularly in its development of officials, with President Clemens Werner now a mainstay of UFC's international officiating team, alongside FIGMMA's Vito Paolillo. The Belgium MMA Federation (BMMAF) is another organisation that has been able to celebrate its return to competition. On 18 September, a

competition was organised between the Finnish MMA Federation (Suomen Vapaaotteluliitto) and the Estonian MMA Federation (EMMAF), two National Federations that have been collaborating for some time.

The Estonian MMA Federation has undergone a recent surge this year, and most notably created online videos for youth participants (available on Facebook), with the program attracting strong interest from parents. Poland is another country that has seen significant development for the amateur sport, despite planned National Championships being postponed: MMA Polska has gained a letter of support from the Polish government, following its lobby for recognition and its ongoing campaign for wider awareness of the vast MMA community that exists in Poland.

New European representatives to be awarded IMMAF membership this year were the Kosovo Mixed Martial Arts Federation and MMA Slovenia. Meanwhile, FELUCHA (Federación Española de Lucha Olímpica y Disciplinas Asociadas) and the Irish Mixed Martial Arts Association established women's commissions in Spain and Ireland respectively.



MEMBERSHIP: REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: EUROPE

MEMBERSHIP: REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: EUROPE

EUROPE: IRELAND IN FOCUS

In 2019-2020 IMMAF provided direct support to the Irish Mixed Martial Arts Association (IMMAA) and engaged the expert consultancy of Denis Rowan and Karl Done. This was to strengthen the organisation as a National Governing Body and to further its application for national sport recognition, with Ireland being a hotspot of contention around the sport following the tragic death of Joao Carvalho in 2016.

In 2020, IMMAA's activities included:

Political/Governance:

- Publication of 5-year Strategic Plan
- Significant progress in establishing rules and corporate structures, adapting a constitution, and acting as the de facto National Governing Body for MMA in the Republic of Ireland
- Applied for membership of the Irish Martial Arts Commission (IMAC) on 9 March 2020. The initial application was rejected because IMMAF does not have GAISF recognition status. IMMAA has appealed this decision and is awaiting the result of this appeal
- Majority of MMA clubs in Ireland are members of the association
- Roll out of individual membership of the association has started. Individual membership will be required for participating in gradings, national team training, competitions etc.
- An 'MMA for Peace', educational cross-border project has been initiated with funding pledges secured
- IMMAA established a national Women's Commission
- We hired a dedicated Administrator for the first time

Safety/Competitor rules:

- IMMAA safety standards are now "best in class" and represent an exceptionally high standard for athletes involved in amateur MMA. These include annual medical examinations, annual blood testing for HIV, HEP B and HEP C, as well as once-off MRI brain scans
- IMMAA implemented clear rules of conduct for participating in IMMAF events. These need to be signed by each competitor, coach, parent and supporter to ensure appropriate behaviour

Coaching Courses and Gradings:

- Developed and rolled out Level 1 and Level 2 coaching courses. Have received broad support amongst the member clubs for these courses



- Starting to implement the IMMAF grading system. First gradings are scheduled to take place in October and November
- IMMAA is hosting regular national squad sessions

Press:

- Thanks to our new administrator, Aisling O'Connor, there has been a significant improvement to our web and social media content. We have built up a library of press releases featuring Irish athletes, coaches and clubs on the IMMAA website



Tim Murphy
IMMAA Board Director

EUROPE: ENGLAND IN FOCUS

After the group's inception in early 2019 and inaugural AGM held in October of the same year, the **English Mixed Martial Arts Association** was detailed to work in an observational shadow sanctioning capacity with the UFC for their flagship European event in London in March 2020. Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of the event.

An initiative to allow **EMMAA** to sanction long-standing English MMA promotion, **Cage Warriors**, is still in progress. This has been a lengthy process and one that will be entirely undertaken on a voluntary basis by the promotion.

EMMAA successfully launched a ground-breaking two year industry programme for school leavers. The certified two year course provides school leaving students, who have a passion for MMA, the opportunity to combine academic studies and recognised sport qualifications with a specialism in MMA. The programme offers an option of continuing onto University if the required entry points are gained. Starting in Liverpool (England), the programme is to be expanded to several other major cities throughout the country in the coming years.

EMMAA are also working to secure additional funding streams through Government backed initiatives.



Marc Goddard
EMMAA President and
IMMAF Director of Regulatory Affairs

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: PAN AMERICA

Pan American territories have enjoyed significant growth in 2020. Interest in IMMAF membership gained momentum last year when the continent drew the highest number of new member applications.

In South America, IMMAF now has representation in almost every country, while the approval of a current application from Chile will complete IMMAF's footprint on the continent. MMA participants in Latin America are very much driven by the dream of discovering a pathway to the UFC, and so members within the region would benefit from collaborating with IMMAF in the implementation of talent development models from amateur to pro. It is not wrong to think that MMA pathways might become as established as those of football one day. The foundational work of members in the region includes social projects and those focussed on young participants and should be encouraged. These should be built upon as a means to demonstrate MMA's potential to give back to the country. Women's participation is growing, inspired by professional female role models coming from Latin America. Large corporate companies are paying more attention to MMA through their support of youth education projects, in response to government objectives for sport to enhance the employability of youth (e.g. through I.T skills).

During the 2020 pandemic, member activities in Latin America exceeded IMMAF's expectation. IMMAF's pilot Question Time ZOOM meetings, for which members were grouped by region and language, were received with high interest. IMMAF's

new initiative to produce official communications in the most widely spoken languages has also been welcomed by the Spanish-speaking community.

While the **Mexican Federation (FAMMEJL)** was forced to postpone its planned hosting of the 2020 IMMAF Pan-America Open Championships, the organisation alongside others in Latin America has progressed in building a solid grassroots base and in its planning for the future. FAMMEJL President Raul Salas Navarro, has been an active supporter across the region, providing help to neighbouring countries.

IMMAF's coaching courses were welcomed in **El Salvador**, where President Carlos Betancourt of the **Salvadorean Kickboxing and MMA Federation** is working to finalise MMA's independence through the National Olympic Committee and attain an agreement supporting the development of MMA in the country.

The new administration of the **Guatemala Association of Mixed Martial Arts**, working alongside supporters, achieved local authority backing for its first National Championships, which served as team selections for the IMMAF Pan-Ams.

Within South America, new members in **Venezuela (FEVAMM)**, **Uruguay (LUMMAAP)** and **Bolivia (Bolivian Mixed Martial Arts Federation)** have strengthened the presence of IMMAF. Meanwhile, thanks to the commitment of Jaime Baron of the **Colombian Mixed Martial Arts Association (OCAMM)**, the National Federation has been strengthened through improved collaboration internally.

In **Argentina**, after internal changes were successfully implemented, the IMMAF coaching course and certification procedures were adopted. **The Argentinian Association of Mixed Martial Arts** is working on projects for young people with support from local business and are paying close attention to funded Olympic Committee projects for youth, which enable sports to use national training facilities while providing I.T education alongside recreational physical activity. The Federation is demonstrating an awareness of how MMA can be a tool for broader national development, and could serve as a benchmark federation for others to follow and draw inspiration from.

In the **Caribbean** islands, leaders came together to discuss opportunities for developing the sport through local talent. Jason Fraser has been a key figure in introducing IMMAF policies to the islands' administrations.

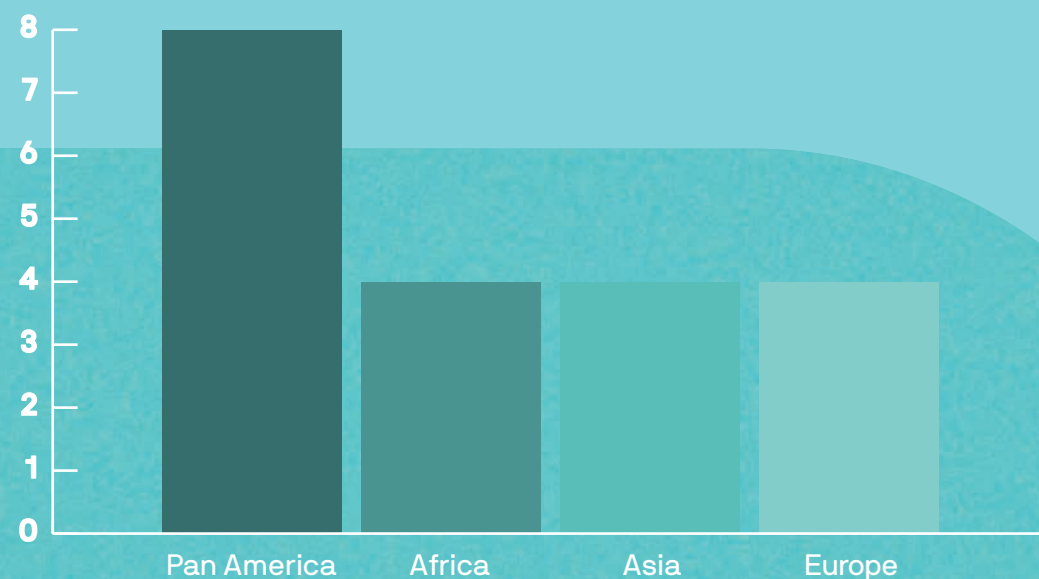
Across Pan America, each member has identified as its goals those that will lead to government or National Olympic Committee recognition. Common goals include safety, the steady development of participants and the education of coaches.

Our fast-growing sport attracts businesses who want to benefit from MMA and make a quick return, and our Federations are working to counter this short-term approach. Progression, youth development and education for all provide proven keys to long-term success, and it is only through years of progressive hard work and dedication that national federation leaders can obtain this.



Gosha Malik
Member Relations Manager

IMMAF-WMMA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2019 PER CONTINENT



PAN AMERICA: USA IN FOCUS

While IMMAF's aim in the USA is to establish a strong, functioning, NOC recognised Federation, the task has proved challenging due to the state-by-state regulation of MMA events that is already in place. This renders the need for a state-by-state approach to gaining support for the initiative.

Crucially, IMMAF's vision is that a National Federation for amateur MMA in the United States should be focussed on the grassroots development of the sport, including coaching, participant training pathways and the organisation of national amateur championships and teams. As an amateur body, it should not compete for the rights to sanction or regulate events and should rather be looking to build mutually supportive relationships with State Athletic Commissions (and the organisations beneath them already mandated to regulate amateur MMA competitions), and recognising their authority.

With CAMO (California Amateur Mixed Martial Arts Organisation) as the leading and most established state body covering the regulation of amateur MMA in the USA (under the California State Athletic Commission), IMMAF initiated communications with the organisation. Under the lead of Regulatory Affairs Director Marc Goddard, IMMAF has proposed a collaboration with CAMO, building on its current activities, to formulate a blueprint that can be pitched then to neighbouring member states. Although slowed due to the current pandemic, IMMAF's proposal has been well received by CAMO and positive communications remain in progress.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: OCEANIA

It has been a quite year, but we were lucky enough to still have been able to hold the 2020 IMMAF Oceania Championships just prior to the world lock down caused by COVID-19. The calibre of talent and level of competition was raised significantly by the participation of international champions and medallists, aided by IMMAF's support particularly to the women's divisions. The event was the first IMMAF Oceania Championships to be live streamed globally on IMMAF TV and to receive extensive national media coverage. Meanwhile, the 2019 IMMAF World Championships Highlights package was licensed to Sky Sports Australia for television broadcasting.

Since then, Oceania has been relatively quiet in all aspects of MMA with state rules overriding national rules with regards to personal travel and activity. Travel has also been banned between Australia and New Zealand in 2020.

Personally, I would like to thank IMMAF staff for their continued support to member countries and MMA communities worldwide in these trying times.

AUSTRALIA: IMMAFA in Numbers in 2020

- Australian National Team athletes - 40
- IMMAF accredited coaches - 55
- IMMAFA accredited officials - 24
- IMMAFA members - 111
- Athletes registered on the IMMAF App - 98
- Coaches registered on the IMMAF App - 23



Stewart Brain

Regional Director for Oceania

NEW ZEALAND: 2020 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It's been an interesting year for MMA in New Zealand. Commencing with the 2020 IMMAF Oceania Open in Australia, which was a huge success for our ANZAC brothers. Team NZ secured a number of Gold, Silver and Bronze medals in a good cross section of men's and women's divisions. This was a great start to 2020.

Having Israel Adesanya winning and defending a UFC World Championship title, along with Jay Jay Wilson's Top 10 ranking with Bellator and Kiwi connected Alex Volkanovski (CKB Auckland) winning and defending his UFC world title, New Zealand is being well represented at the top of the professional game. Meanwhile, amateur development remains on the right track boasting multiple international medals, placings and rankings, thanks to our great national coaching team, consisting of Matt Toa, Jason Vorster, Steve Oliver and Carlo Meister NZMMAF.

With the UFC showcasing their exceptional event here in March we enjoyed a very successful start to our year before the COVID-19 debacle hit, and now some months later things are just starting to

get back on track. Unfortunately, all International events remain on hold until at least 2021 and we have been left with holes in our development programme around international competitions and events.

We are in almost weekly talks with both Sport New Zealand and the Department of Internal Affairs, from whom we are seeking more direction for the advancement of NZMMAF's work within the Combat Sports Community.

Even with the COVID-19 hiccup, the NZMMAF continues along a strong path to develop the sport and achieve ongoing success within and outside New Zealand.



Terry Hill
NZMMAF President

SPORT

DEVELOPMENT

COACHING AND PROGRESSION

The year 2019 was remarkable in terms of the running of the IMMAF Coach Education and Certification program, which is interconnected with the IMMAF Progression scheme.

IMMAF COACH EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Certification

During 2019, prior to the pandemic, we managed to run three courses for coaches from four National Federations in Greece, Luxembourg, Belgium, and South Africa, where 72 coaches were certified from four countries.

Total number of IMMAF fully certified coaches (on September 2020) – 525

Online IMMAF programmes

Since March 2020, due to the travel restrictions, national lockdowns and restrictions on the practice of contact sports, we have had to reshape the program. We are offering theory online and deferring practical assessments to when restrictions have been lifted. 217 coaches from 20 National Federations signed up for the online course and 145 have successfully completed it. In addition to the courses, several webinars have been offered to course candidates.

Indian MMA set the record by enrolling 54 coaches onto the online program and should be regarded as the most active National Federation in coach education in 2020.

National Federations whose coaches are studying online are: Argentina, Belgium, Bolivia, Cameroon, Colombia, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, DR Congo, El Salvador, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Kosovo, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malaysia, New Zealand, Panama, Philippines, Polynesia and Uruguay,

New IMMAF Coach Qualification Pilot

I am happy to report the success of another pilot project on the coach education front, which was trialled in Australia with the International MMA Federation of Australia (IMMAFA) by Richie Cranny, Coaching Commission Chairman. The idea was to assist the smooth integration of qualified and



Andrew Moshanov
Director of Development

highly experienced coaches from other combat sports into MMA, specifically those with striking and wrestling backgrounds. For this reason, the coaching qualifications, MMA Stand-up Coach and MMA Groundwork Coach, were proposed. Candidates of both sit the full Level 1 theory test but prove their technical proficiency in the field of their interest or previous experience. This model will be presented to all National Federations and recommended for adoption.

Total number of coaches qualified as IMMAF Level 1 MMA Stand Up Coach (on September 2020) – 15.

IMMAF PROGRESSION SCHEME

IMMAF Progression Scheme's grading criteria is currently under review by the IMMAF Coaching Commission. It has been proposed that the grading exam should include both the static demonstration of skills and their playback in the manner of a free fight. This would be pre-arranged at the beginning of the grading ladder, with increasing situational and realistic drills incorporated along the journey to brown belt. Recommendations will shortly be provided to National Federations for consideration.

IMMAF App (mobile phone application) will continue to be the principal hub for all grading matters and coaching needs. There is growing interest in this state-of-the-art product, with nearly 5,000 users from 77 National Federations registered on it so far.

On September 2020:

- The total number of gradings managed through the App is 958 (from yellow-white to brown)
- There are 3,800 white belts registered on the App, which we will hopefully soon be advancing through the ranks of the IMMAF grading scheme

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FOR U12S

Programme for Schools: "Let's Mix Martial Arts"

We have observed great interest in studying mixed martial arts from young children. According to statistics, nearly 65% of IMMAF coaches offer youth classes. Also, we have received requests from the national educational authorities of a number of countries for a special mixed martial arts study programme for schools. To meet this growing



interest, the program "Let's Mix Martial Arts" has been drafted.

The program will see the study of mixed martial arts in a form similar to that of physical education lessons in primary schools. The focus will be on general development, life-saving skills, a gradual introduction to the world's various martial arts and the cultures of their respective countries, eventually combining a few of those arts into one.

The roll-out of the program will require the special training of a pool of instructors, who will all need to be IMMAF qualified coaches. Also, we feel that there is good commercial value for self-employed coaches in running this program. In conjunction with youth development and the introduction of the U12s program, we plan to launch another qualification – MMA Youth Coach. The programme should have been launched at the beginning of this year, but due to current circumstances we have for the time being postponed its implementation

IMMAF Grading scheme for U12s

We are working to create additional grades for under 12-year-olds, which will be linked to the main grading syllabus and allow for the transfer of grades when a child joins the main pathway. This work is due for completion for the end of 2020.

Lastly, thank you to all the coaches and sports enthusiasts for your dedication and passion, without whom it would not have been possible to elevate the sport of mixed martial arts to where it stands now. I am looking forward to working with everyone next year to develop our ideas further!



THE IMMAF COACHING TASKFORCE STATISTICS (2020)	2019	2020
IMMAF CERTIFIED COACHES	400	525
IMMAF COACHES AVERAGE AGE	38.2	39.0
MALE COACHES	91%	91%
FEMALE COACHES	9%	9%
COACHES WITH SECONDARY EDUCATION	44%	44%
COACHES WITH A COLLEGE EDUCATION	34%	33%
COACHES WHO ARE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES	35%	36%
UNIVERSITY PROFILE SPORTS / NON-SPORTS	50/50	50/50
COACHES BACKGROUND (SOLELY MMA)	3%	3%
COACHES BACKGROUND (STRIKING COMBAT SPORTS)	63%	63%
COACHES BACKGROUND (GRAPPLING COMBAT SPORTS)	34%	34%
COACHES OWNING GYM PREMISES	67%	65%

EVENTS:

CHAMPIONSHIPS REPORT

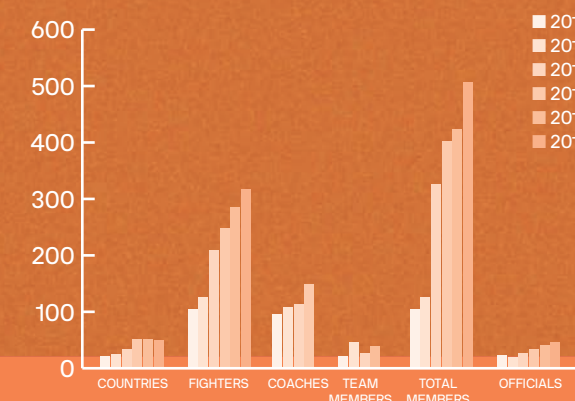
2019 IMMAF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The biggest and the most anticipated event of 2019 was The World Amateur MMA Championships, held from November 11 to 18 in Manama, Bahrain. This was the 3rd consecutive World Championships to be held in Bahrain and the smoothest by far. The amalgamated IMMAF – WMMMA Federations showed complete unity and dedication to being a member of the one true, world governing body for MMA.

Due to detailed, advanced planning and extraordinary support from the Host Federation, the Bahrain MMA Federation, the following improvements were reported:

1. Host Federation staffing further streamlined with key persons made accountable
2. Sufficient resourcing: volunteers (new and experienced); data department expanded to five pre-trained officials which greatly improved each activity; dedicated hotel manager
3. Transport operations
4. Improved weigh-ins due to calibrated scales and implemented queue system

The Championships featured record numbers of participants in the history of IMMAF – WMMMA.



It is fair to say that the IMMAF World Championships has become a flagship event, bringing together athletes, medics, officials, staff, fans and, most importantly, nations for an acclaimed end of year spectacle for the sport of amateur MMA.

OPERATIONS AND REGULATION



Alistair Pettitt
Director of Events

2020 OVERVIEW

In 2020, IMMAF had plans to hold eight championship events:

1. Oceania (Australia)
2. South Africa (Johannesburg)
3. Pan America (Mexico)
4. Asia (Kazakhstan)
5. Europeans (Italy)
6. Youth (Italy)
7. World (Kazakhstan)
8. World Team (Bahrain)

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, only the Oceania Open Championships were able to take place on the Gold Coast, Australia, 5-8 March 2020.

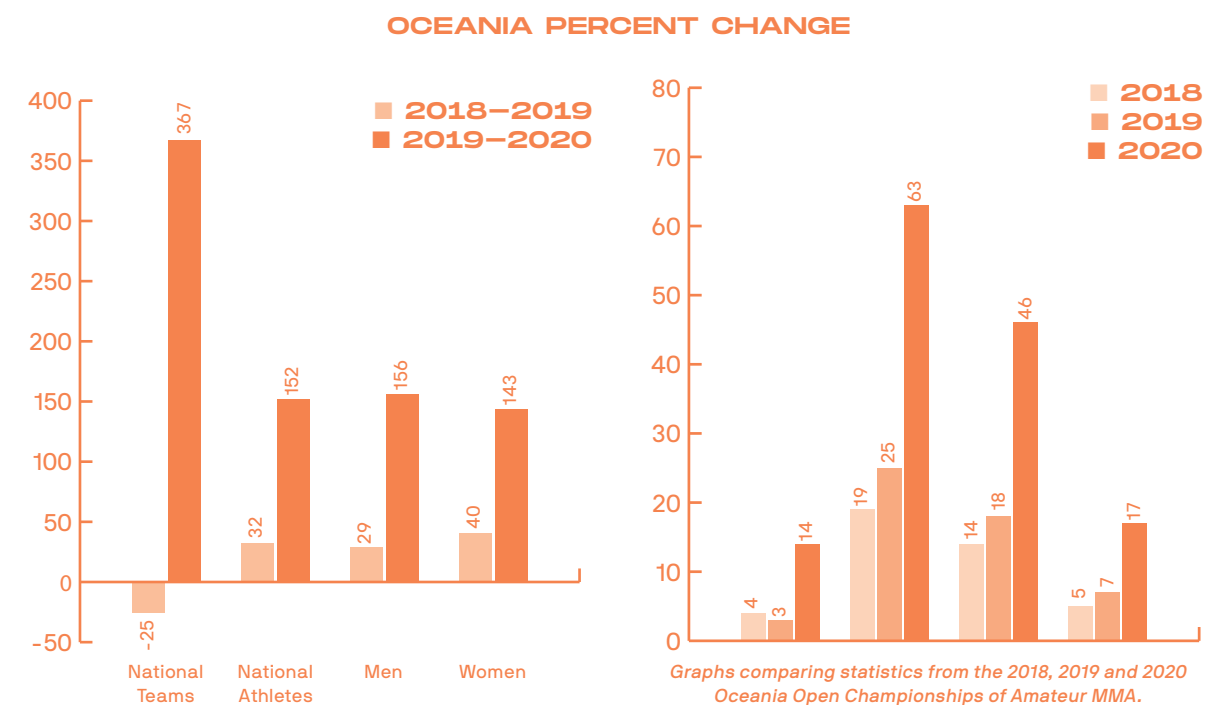


2020 IMMAF OCEANIA OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS – HIGHLIGHTS

- IMMAF supported the development of the competition by sponsoring top ranking athletes from non-Oceania countries to compete against the home nations
- Competition (participation of male and females)
 - IMMAF ensured female brackets were competitive; 10 additional females participated in 2020 compared to the 2019 championships, and for the first time in the history of the Oceania Championships, female athletes competed in atomweight and strawweight divisions
 - Male athletes competed in strawweight, flyweight, heavyweight and super heavyweight categories for the first time
- An increased number of Federations participated on previous years, raising the standard of competition and increasing awareness of the IMMAF event and brand
- New member in Oceania, the French Polynesian Federation of Wrestling, MMA and Associated Disciplines, debuted on the IMMAF platform with their President winning Gold
- The IMMAF core events team were deployed to execute the delivery of the event, enabling the team to manage and implement IMMAF protocols independently without heavily relying on the National Federation for support
- Live streaming was executed by IMMAF for the first time in the region
- In the devastating wake of the Australian bush fires, a percentage of the public entry ticket fees was given as a charitable donation to support recovery efforts

OVERALL CHANGES IN PARTICIPATION AT IMMAF EVENTS (%)

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the only events data available in 2020 is for the Oceania Open Championships. The graph indicates the percentage change in participation over the two periods, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020



EVENTS TEAM ACTIVITIES IN PROGRESS

The Events team has taken the opportunity during the pandemic to work on initiatives that have otherwise been in the pipeline. The aim is for these initiatives to come into play during 2021.

OPERATIONS MANUAL UPDATE:

For the past several years; IMMAF events have massively improved in all areas, the number of participants has increased and staff roles and positions have changed. Therefore we saw the need to completely restructure and update the Event Operations Manual, which is a guide for the operational management of all IMMAF events. We have managed to hyperlink all the policies, which makes the file easier to comprehend, and the team can update the policies independently which will be reflected in the digital manual.

TEAM PENALTY POINT SYSTEM (TPPS):

The TPPS is a comprehensive point deduction system that will provide IMMAF with the ability to hold National Federations/Teams accountable for violations of IMMAF's standards and Code of Conduct. If team members violate set standards, ranking points will be deducted that will impact their tournament and overall World Rankings.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME:

A project is underway to develop a model for recruiting volunteers for events and IMMAF activities. This model will include recruitment, training, volunteer packs and role assignments, and will serve the IMMAF team as a whole.

CHECK-IN OPTIMISATION:

Digitalisation and automation of the check-in process at events will allow for time reduction, self-service and getting rid of paper.

WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY INTRODUCTION:

Research is being carried out into wearable technology and its potential implementation, with the goals of enriching athletic statistics and real-time tracking of health and injury data.

AGGREGATION AND CONSOLIDATION OF CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL DATA

Work is being conducted into the aggregation and consolidation of data across IMMAF departments (e.g. Equipment, Medical, Marketing, Membership). The goal is to establish a one-stop, centrally organised shop, from which data can be extracted for all departments' purposes.

INSTANT ONLINE SCORING SYSTEM

Best systems and practice for instant online scoring are under research by the team to make on-screen scoring available to audiences, athletes and corners after each round of a match. The goals are modernisation, sport development and evolution, as well as the opportunity for the audience to understand the evolution of each bout and for athletes to adapt their gameplay on-the-go.

INTERNSHIP:

IMMAF had an intern start with the Events team in September 2020 for a period of 18 weeks. Sophie Muller joins the team looking to use the placement as a research project for her degree studies. Sophie has already completed a successful internship with the IMMAF affiliated German MMA Federation and we look forward to welcoming her to IMMAF.

SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT:

The Sustainability Project is a 6 week project that started on 31 August 20. It sees the IMMAF Events Team supervise a taskforce to conduct a Sustainability Review and develop Sustainability Recommendations, based on the UN's 17 Sustainability Development Goals.

The legacy project will form the basis for future sustainable development projects and opportunities within IMMAF's activities, in an area of growing significance both in and outside of sport.

WELCOME PACK:

A Welcome Pack brochure has been developed to help new member federations understand the main services provided by IMMAF and to introduce the IMMAF team.

REGULATORY AFFAIRS 2019-2020

OFFICIALS TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

2019 saw IMMAF close out the year with a further two Judge Certification Courses held in London and Copenhagen. IMMAF saw a total of 13 delegates pass the required standard in London and 9 from Copenhagen. Enquiries from Singapore, Poland and Uzbekistan remain outstanding and a second officials' seminar in India scheduled for February 2020 was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Once travel restrictions return to normal and the current climate eases somewhat, we can resume our global drive for the education, certification and development of officials.

IMMAF CERTIFIED FIGHTING AREAS (MMA RINGS)

After a lengthy design, development and consultation period, spanning several months of routine inspection and modifications, the first ever IMMAF certified MMA ring, the IMMAF Fighting Area, was shipped to the UK from our manufacturer in mainland Europe. This first of its kind MMA ring has several key design and safety modifications that sets it as a "first in class" fighting area for global distribution. The unique and cleverly enhanced safety design features make this a "go-to" product to be sold by IMMAF under license, setting the de facto, certified standard for national and international mixed martial arts competitions. A detailed specification, price guide and accompanying "walk-through" video demonstration are available on request.

CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT AND PATHWAY FOR IMMAF LICENSED OFFICIALS

It was with a great sense of achievement and pride that in July of 2020 we saw the culmination of the hard work, determination and commitment of IMMAF licensed officials Clemens Werner (Germany) and Vito Paolillo (Italy), when they were selected to officiate at the UFC Fight Island series of events that took place in Abu Dhabi, UAE. Both Clemens and Vito have been regular fixtures at many of IMMAF's international events in an officiating capacity.

On a personal note, I'm so happy that both Vito's and Clemens' hard work, dedication and portrayal of the qualities required to be an official have been recognised on the biggest stage and that

they were granted this opportunity. They have both worked diligently, taking advantage of all the opportunities presented to them over a number of years both at IMMAF and with me across many professional events throughout Europe, the Middle East and beyond. I am proud to see their journey along IMMAF's educational pathway for officials culminate on the world's biggest MMA stage, and for these guys it's just the beginning of the next stage of their officiating careers.

IMMAF ELECTRONIC SCORING SYSTEM

We are currently working with and developing a unique real time and self-enclosed electronic scoring system for use at all IMMAF International Events. This system was developed for and utilised by our partners at the UFC. What separates this system is its ability to work independently of the venue Wi-Fi coverage. This negates room for error and malfunction and the system has been trialled in both national and international competitions. The benefit of electronic scoring systems is their "real time" functionality, mitigating the human error inherent in manual scoring.

RECORD SETTING NUMBERS AT THE IMMAF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2019

It was not just the number of athletes, matches and countries represented at the IMMAF World Championships in Bahrain 2019 that broke all records – it was also the representation from the officials' pool that stood out. A team of over 40 referees and judges representing 15 Countries took charge of more than 350 matches across a seven-day, four-fighting area event that saw all previous statistics and measures well and truly superseded. It was a true testament to the diversity and representation on a global scale of IMMAF in its development of mixed martial arts officials.



Marc Goddard

EMMAA President and
IMMAF Director of Regulatory Affairs



MEDICAL REPORT

The Medical Commission is chaired by Dr Randa Basharon (USA based orthopaedic surgeon and ringside physician) and composed of leading international experts in sports medicine. It continues to pioneer medical safety policies for all competition groups, with an unwavering focus on best practices in brain injury detection and prevention.

The Commission's ongoing alliance with SAFE MMA (UK based medical charity) has proven to be a successful component in athlete pre- and post-fight screening and evaluations – a partnership which saw the innovation and implementation of brand new, age-appropriate standards and processes to support the highly successful inaugural 2019 Youth MMA World Championships in Rome.

The majority of the Commission doctors were again on hand to support Dr Aljulanda Almaskari lead a team of 25 doctors and 60 medical support staff delivering outstanding care throughout the 2019 World and Junior World Championships in Manama. This included 24-hour medical support for over 450 athletes throughout the week, as well as more than 1500 pre- and post-fight medical examinations and an onsite field hospital which fully managed 40 of the 50 recorded injuries arising from 388 bouts over five days of competition.

The IMMAF Medical Commission continues to address medical safety as it relates to the rapid expansion of MMA and the scalability issues arising

from increased international growth of the sport. Each year, IMMAF's medical committee participates in education and research agendas for the purpose of advancing the safety and medical care in MMA.

Over the past year the IMMAF Medical Committee has been developing a medical manual for ringside physicians. The Ringside Medical Manual and brain injury prevention are both ongoing works in progress to establish reproducible medical policies and procedures for quality and safety assurance during competitions.

Most recently, the Medical Committee has prepared medical advisory protocols for return-to-training in a new COVID-19 landscape, and continues to develop policies on return-to-competition for amateur MMA.



Yoni Gottlieb

Athlete Safety Director

ANTI-DOPING REPORT 2019

During 2019, IMMAF with the support of its national federations and officials, expanded its Anti-Doping programme to achieve its most comprehensive coverage of testing at regional and World Championships, and targeted education and information programmes.

Despite the frustration of not being a WADA Code Signatory, IMMAF has continued to build good relationships with National Anti-Doping Organisations and WADA accredited laboratories to deliver WADA compliant Anti-Doping testing at Major Championships. This enabled IMMAF to deliver testing at five Championships, in each region of the World. Testing of medallists took place at the Asian (Bangkok), Pan American (Bahamas), Africa (Johannesburg) and European (Rome) Open Championships as well as the World Championships in Bahrain. Another first in 2019 was the inclusion of the Junior category in the Anti-Doping programme at the European Championships.

Although the actual level of testing is modest (reflecting the high cost of testing), it has been targeted using intelligence and review of athlete performances and national Anti-Doping activities.

Tests allocated between the genders reflected the higher number of weight categories available for male athletes. In 2019, the programme also included education of youth athletes in preparation of testing. In the five years of IMMAF's Anti-Doping Policy, testing has covered 210 athletes (154 male and 56 female). This includes target tests and follow up testing. No athletes are included in the Registered Testing Pool to date, although suspended athletes are notified that testing is a requirement of reinstatement. Regrettably, funds did not stretch to a comprehensive out-of-competition testing programme on ranked athletes. Monitoring of changes to the rankings list are helping to inform how a Registered Testing Pool could operate and give effective coverage, once funds are available.

Recognising the inclusion of younger athletes, IMMAF published its first Athletes and Support Personnel Anti-Doping Guide for the World Championships 2019. This built on the Anti-Doping information guide made available for participants in the first European Youth Championships. In keeping with the International Standard for Education and as IMMAF's Anti-Doping Adviser's advocated policy, athletes should be informed and educated first

NUMBER OF DOPING TESTS CARRIED OUT BY IMMAF, 2015 – 2019

YEAR	NO. OF EVENTS	NO. OF TESTS
2015	2	52
2016	3	44
2017	4	44
2018	3 (Asian Championships cancelled)	41
2019	5	42

before being exposed to an Anti-Doping testing programme. Host nations are invited to provide outreach resources. As IMMAF's app is developing, inclusion of Anti-Doping information is being planned.

Results are managed in accordance with the IMMAF Anti-Doping policy which requires that athletes are provisionally suspended when an Anti-Doping rule violation is alleged. In order to ensure fairness, details of a confirmed Anti-Doping Rule Violation are announced on the Anti-Doping Sanctions page of the IMMAF website, when the full due process has been completed, including time for the athlete or IMMAF to submit an appeal against a sanction and for the appeal body to issue a final determination. Due to the timescale for due process, there can be a significant time lag before a case is concluded.



Michele Verroken
Anti-Doping Consultant



COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL



BROADCAST IN 2019

With IMMAF TV at the heart of IMMAF's broadcast strategy, in 2019 IMMAF live-streamed its Tier 1 and 2 events – the European, Asian and World Championships – followed by video-on-demand programming. For the better funded European and World Championships, 24-minute highlight packages were additionally produced for television.

IMMAF TV 2019

Number of site users: 49,000

New users: 48,541

*(*we can infer from this a drop-off rate from the previous year due to long periods between streamed events/ fresh content, meaning we started again from ground zero at the start of 2019)*

Users during World championships: 16,700, peaking at 7,888 at one time (*live broadcast on several channels)

Users during Euros: 15,590 peaking at 12,000 users on Day 1, which was free-to-view (*exclusively at IMMAF TV)

TELEVISION LICENSEES IN 2019

We had less television broadcasters in 2019 than in previous years due to no advance commitment from IMMAF to film any event, but nonetheless secured the following deals:

- Fox Sports Asia (Asia)
- Fox Sports (Australia)
- BT Sport (UK and Ireland)
- POLSAT (Poland)
- Cosmote (Greece)
- Bahrain TV (Bahrain)
- M1 TV (Russia).
- Supersport (Africa)
- Sport Channel Network (UK)
- Italian Fight Network (Italy)
- Mediasport (Italy)
- TV One (Indonesia)
- British Forces Broadcast Services (worldwide)

MEDIA PARTNER LICENSEES IN 2019

- The Sun Online (UK/Ireland, USA, Australia)
- L'Equipe (France)

The BBC (online) expressed an interest in live-streaming the World Championships but this could not be facilitated due to the exclusivity of IMMAF's deal with The Sun

2020 IN REVIEW

- For 2020, IMMAF committed budget to live streaming of all its Championships on IMMAF TV, with television packages to be produced for its Tier 1 and 2 Championships. A delayed live package was planned for the World Championships
- With COVID-19 wreaking havoc with events, IMMAF held just one competition in 2020 – the Tier 3, Oceania Open Championships. The Oceania Finals were live-streamed as free-to-view at IMMAF TV, where they remain available to watch on-demand
- With a year-round commitment to production of all IMMAF events for the first time, IMMAF commenced the year by signing a Broadcast Sales Agreement with Fighting Spirit. Although this has largely not been possible to maximise through the current crisis, Fighting Spirit has facilitated paying content deals with WATAAA (Middle East and North Africa) and the Fighting Spirit MMA show
- IMMAF held discussions with other potential licensees Fite TV and SNTV (currently paused)
- IMMAF engaged expert broadcast consultant, Giles Goodwin, to review and produce a Broadcast Strategy with IMMAF's Brand and Communications Director for 2020 and beyond. Although its implementation is currently frozen, key points from the plan have been incorporated into IMMAF's 2021-2022 Strategic Plan and are outlined below

BROADCAST STRATEGY PLAN – SUMMARY

- IMMAF is in a unique position to take complete control of its media strategy having no legacy agreements and being in full control of its event management and content creation
- The objective is to develop a direct relationship not just with those participating in the sport but those following it too, globally. This direct to consumer (D2C) approach will allow IMMAF to maximise the true value of its audience through a commercial model centred on the aggregation and management of first party data, as opposed to reliance on third party broadcast revenues

- It is unlikely that the IMMAF live or highlights packages will command significant rights fees from paying broadcasters in the next couple of years
- Therefore, IMMAF TV must sit at the heart of IMMAF's broadcast strategy providing direct-to-consumer, commercial opportunities
- That first party relationship and the data that can aggregated will create significant value for the business and spur future commercial products and services (such as merchandise sales, athlete meet and greets, betting and fantasy gaming)
- IMMAF must push to gain wider platforms exposure for the highlight packages via Fighting Spirit. IMMAF should not expect significant fees but rather push for any available promotion and audience analytics in any deal

PROPOSED ACTIONS 2021-22

- Additional colour content and programming to be developed to create a richer viewing experience for IMMAF TV subscribers
- IMMAF.TV has to date delivered small revenues which demonstrate a willingness of MMA fans from over 30 countries to pay for IMMAF's output

Improvements to customer experience through localised pricing, local language text and relevant marketing messages are to be implemented

- IMMAF is to create distributable assets (image/video/text) that drive the audience to register with IMMAF TV, as part of a cohesive plan to promote via all available channels
- To deliver content to the relevant destination at the right time to licensees, the business requires an efficient way to store and distribute content; namely a CMS (content management system)



Isobel Carnwath
Brand and Communications Director

BRAND AND COMMUNICATIONS

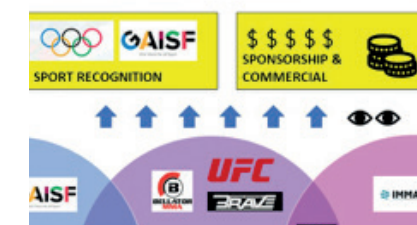
STRATEGY 2019-2020

The strategy approved by the board in June 2019 was to prioritise and invest into the development of IMMAF as a consumer brand, through enhanced brand appeal, development of IMMAF content and platforms (including social media) and better reach in the MMA fan media.

Prior to 2019, with an extremely limited budget, the primary focus of any PR expenditure has been into business-to-business and lobbying for sport recognition. As IMMAF grows, and in order to grow further, investment into broadcast and consumer PR must become a priority.

With the cancellation of events and freeze on budgets in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many planned actions have been postponed to 2021-22, with the same priorities at the fore.

BRAND REVIEW



IMMAF underwent a brand upgrade in 2020, with a refresh of the IMMAF logo for its digital

platforms and updated affiliate logos designed for all national federations, as part of our drive to improve our consumer appeal.

We launched a new website as part of our digital makeover in April. The new look and quality standard is being applied to IMMAF's other digital platforms as part of the brand roll out.

STAFF EXPANSION

The Brand and Communications Teams underwent an expansion in 2019 with staffing gaps filled in key areas, including:

- Social Media Manager and content team
- Professional Webmaster (graphic designer)
- Hire of professional photographers for events
- Hire of professional videographers and content creators

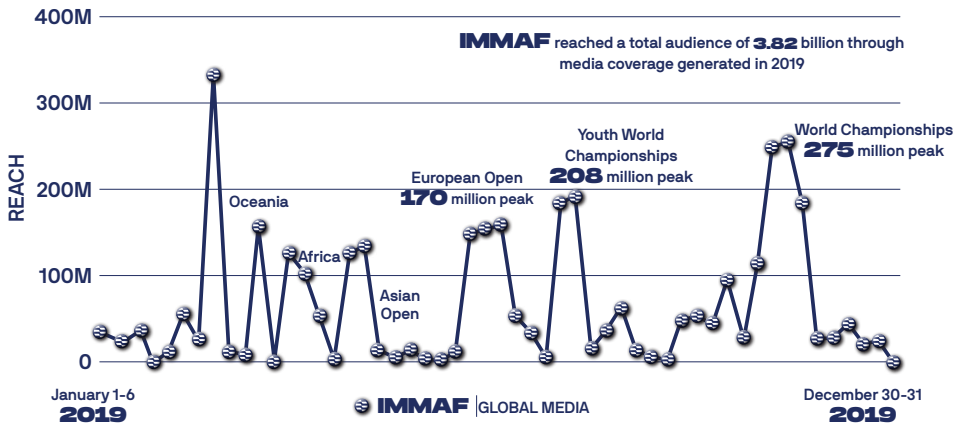
IMMAF also appointed expert consultancy through the hiring of Nick Davies as CSO, former Communications Director at World Athletics, and the formation of an expert Marketing and Communications Committee, with world experts Adrian Werner (Olympic sport journalist), Steve Wilson (IOC Communications Commission), Martin Lewandowski and Rashid Salleh (MMA promoters). Further staff requirements have been identified across communications, production and broadcast departments to be addressed in 2021-2022.



COMMUNICATIONS REVIEW

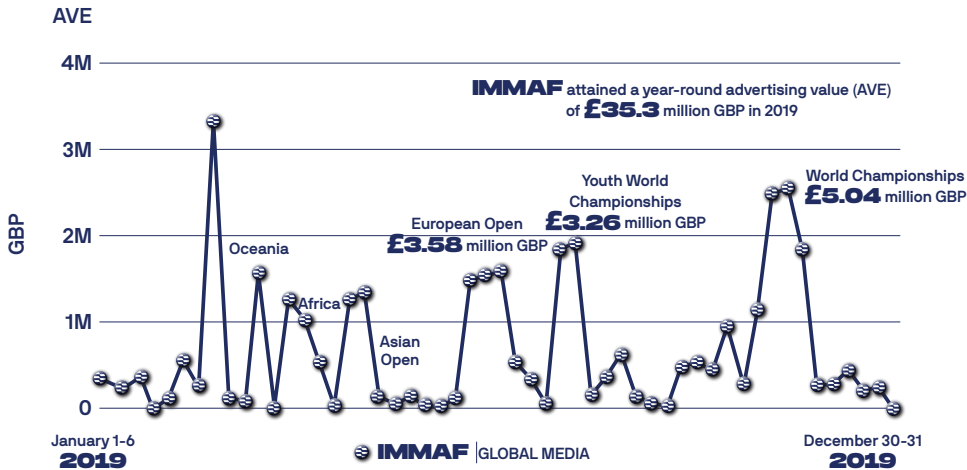
MEDIA REACH 2019:

IMMAF reached a total audience of 3.82 billion people through media coverage generated in 2019.



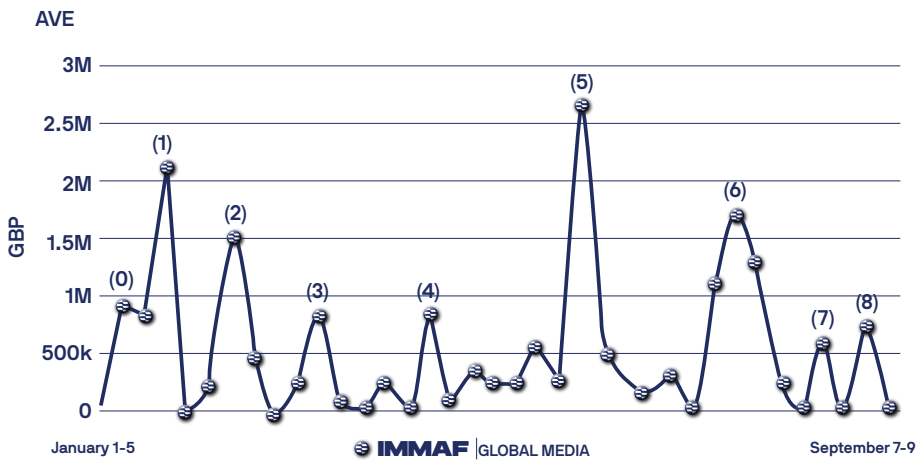
ADVERTISING VALUE OF MEDIA COVERAGE 2019:

IMMAF attained a year-round advertising value (AVE) of £35.3 million through media coverage generated in 2019.



MEDIA COVERAGE 2020:

In 2020 IMMAF hosted just one event, the regional Oceania Open Championships, with the remainder cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the volume of coverage dropped in 2020, as a result, IMMAF still managed to attain a total audience reach of 2.9 billion people between January 1 and September 9.



COVERAGE SPIKES IN 2020		
REFERENCE NUMBER	DATE (2020)	TOP STORIES
(0)	January 7	IMMAF resumes legal battle with WADA
(1)	January 20	MMA is legalised in France
(2)	February 10	Kazakhstan to host IMMAF Asian MMA Championships Uzbekistan sets up MMA federation under IMMAF
(3)	March 9	Oceania Championships
(4)	April 13	IMMAF hosts Mokaev vs Yamaguchi Watch Party
(5)	June 1	MMA is a Sport Petition reaches 10,000 Signatures
(6)	June 20	KOBI (Indonesian federation) is recognised by National Sports Committee (KONI) MMA Poland returns to play with studio fight night IMMAF veteran Leah McCourt (Bellator) has shoulder surgery BRAVE announce IMMAF veterans to fight card
(7)	August 17	IMMAF veteran Shoab Yusuf trains with Amir Khan ahead of BRAVE IMMAF launches Women's Commission
(8)	August 31	Polish Sports Minister states support for Polish MMA federation



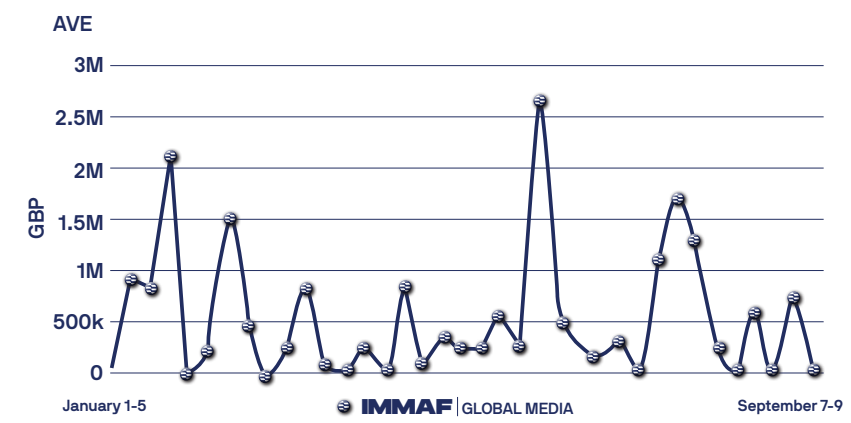
2020 OCEANIA OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS COVERAGE

IMMAF hired a local PR agency for 15 hours of work spanning the fortnight of the 2020 Oceania Championships:

- Coverage by Australian media of the IMMAF Oceania Championships attained 12.33 million audience reach, and included stories in the Daily Telegraph (Aus) and across other national and regional newspapers
- International Coverage of the Oceania Championships achieved a 10.5 million audience reach

ADVERTISING VALUE OF MEDIA COVERAGE 2020:

IMMAF attained a year-round advertising value (AVE) of £19.3 million through media coverage generated in 2020.



SENTIMENT 2020

Sentiment towards IMMAF in the media remained largely either neutral (73.9%) or positive (25.3%) in 2020, with the bulk of IMMAF news being sport business orientated due to the cancellation of competitions. Less than 1% of mentions of IMMAF were associated with negative news stories.

LOBBYING

The IMMAF Communication team has supported the lobbying efforts of the IMMAF leadership in our bid for sport recognition, contributing to the broader public relations matrix.

In May, the MMA Is A Sport campaign was launched to promote a petition of the IOC for MMA to be formally recognised as a sport. Garnering the support of other MMA stakeholders, including UFC, KSW, BRAVE, Cage Warriors, Tuff N Uff and a host of amateur and professional athletes, the campaign received global media attention, in outlets that included: Sport Business, Inside the Games, SportCal, Around the Rings, Fracs Jeux, TalkSport, ABC, BBC online and MMA Junkie, alongside a host of specialist MMA and sports outlets in multiple languages. Private petition options were launched for countries where petition platform, change.org, cannot be accessed. In July, the petition hit 20,000 signatures across public and private platforms



The petition achieved its primary purpose of exerting pressure on GAISF and facilitated the reopening of communications with them, where we had previously been stonewalled. At that point, we ceased to promote the petition since collaboration with GAISF administration was now required to further our application and the conversation around it.

LOOKING AHEAD IN BRAND AND COMMUNICATIONS AND BROADCAST: STRATEGY PLAN

VISION 2024:

- IMMAF athletes are recognisable sports star names
- IMMAF amateur MMA championships and athletes are routinely covered in the global media and local media
- IMMAF has an established, commercial in-house production company
- IMMAF and its members have an extensive, aggregate global audience across IMMAF TV and social media (to set targets)

PRIORITY GOALS 2021–22:

- Growing consumer footprint and engagement (MMA and sports fans); including direct-to-consumer (social channels, IMMAF TV) and in leading MMA fan media
- Driving consumers to IMMAF TV (as the primary focus of IMMAF's Broadcast Strategy)
- Increasing sales of content, tickets and products
- Attaining a credible number of followers and subscribers to be attractive to sponsors

AREAS FOR INVESTMENT IN 2021–22:

- Broadcast content management system
- Content creation (video) (*colourful stories/documentaries/series for IMMAF TV/YouTube to promote subscriptions/PPV*)
- Hiring staff to fill the gaps for critical functions
- Media Partnerships with MMA fan sites
- Development of public database for IMMAF athletes



Isobel Carnwath

Brand and Communications Director

SOCIAL MEDIA

Uni4m Media has been contracted to provide social media management and content creation services for IMMAF since July 2019. Over the course of the partnership, the symbiotic relationship between Uni4m Media and IMMAF has propelled the international governing body's social media from strength to strength.

The main changes implemented by Uni4m are:

- Optimized social media strategy which is initially outlined every quarter with input from the IMMAF Brand and Communications Director and fully outlined on a weekly basis
- Original content ideas which leverage IMMAF's existing videos and photo archive
- Management and monitoring of the social media platforms, comments and messages directed to IMMAF regarding championships, courses and political developments

NEW CONCEPTS

Over the course of the partnership, Uni4m Media has continually innovated to reinvigorate social media channels through fresh content ideas. With COVID-19 halting the majority of IMMAF events, a new content strategy for Q2/Q3 needed to be developed around the need for increased original content creation (despite challenges presented by lockdown) and leveraging of archive material. New original video content included the **IMMAF Talks (Video podcast)** series on the IMMAF Facebook channel, hosted by Andreas Georgiou. Meanwhile archive material was leveraged to produce highlights series, **IMMAF Memories** and **Top 5**. The Top 5 series was designed to spark debate over the inclusion of certain finishes in the compilation and produced IMMAF's most-watched social video with 34,000+ views on IGTV. Meanwhile, **IMMAF All-Stars**, which posed IMMAF fantasy match-ups, typically received 200-300 comments per piece, dwarfing the number of comments on other IMMAF posts.

CAMPAIGN: MMA IS A SPORT

Alongside the IMMAF Brand and Communications Director, Uni4m developed a strategy for the MMA Is A Sport social media campaign, which featured the use of a Facebook Group. With core campaign branding and artwork created by agency Shoot The Moon, the development of further content and the

monitoring of platforms was conducted by Uni4m and the IMMAF Brand and Communications Director. Multiple posts were published each day, supported by strong community management including response to questions and comments within the group and on broader social media. The campaign reached over 100,000 people on social media.

HIGHLIGHT: INSTAGRAM REELS

In August 2020, Instagram launched its 'Reels' service, a built-in service which aims to replicate the success of social media platform TikTok with its short 14-second vertical clips. Uni4m posted a head-kick KO which garnered more than 150,000 views, helping IMMAF gain 300+ new followers in just over two weeks.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE

IMMAF's social media has been visibly impacted by the lack of Championships in 2020, which generally provide its channels with plenty of content opportunities and more easily facilitate lineal story-telling (e.g. building athletes, nations and their achievements). Most notably this has resulted in slower growth in followers, when in normal circumstances the championships provide periods of exponential growth. Despite this, through resourceful content ideas and strong community engagement, all three IMMAF channels have continued to grow in followers and have maintained high levels of engagement. In fact, the necessity of building better out-of-event stories has focussed the IMMAF communications team on the promotion of IMMAF's other governance activities, essential to marketing MMA as a sport that deserves Olympic Movement recognition.



Andreas Georgiou
Uni4m Media

GROWTH OF FOLLOWERS			
PLATFORM	FACEBOOK	INSTAGRAM	TWITTER
July 4th 2019	35,713	9,594	23,097
August 26th 2020	43,266	18,930	23,981

2019 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS ENGAGEMENT			
PLATFORM	FACEBOOK	INSTAGRAM	TWITTER
IMPRESSIONS	2,548,184	2,249,615	545,100
ENGAGEMENTS	134,839	49,541	30,700





IT

REVIEW AND STRATEGY

In the final part of 2019, an independent review was completed of IMMAF's IT infrastructure by company, Nemysis. Key recommendations include:

- the centralising of IMMAF assets and data
- the writing of a digital strategy as the holistic framework for the building/development of all IMMAF digital assets. This should be focussed on the delivery on IMMAF objectives and revenue generation, to avoid the risk of an eclectic mix of suppliers and solutions that operate in potentially unrelated and sub-optimal silos

PROPOSED OBJECTIVES OF THE DIGITAL STRATEGY:

- To improve the day-to-day capabilities for staff to deliver their objectives
- To manage and selectively optimise the user experience for all external stakeholders
- To accumulate corporate knowledge about those stakeholders
- To deliver reporting and insights, feeding in to IMMAF decision making

- To deliver insights and inform tactics for engaging directly with fans and athletes
- Ultimately, to provide the information needed to build the case for Olympic inclusion.

HIRE OF IT MANAGER AND SUPPORT

IT Manager Tobias Sahlin was appointed by the board to implement the report's recommendations, and to be manage IMMAF's IT infrastructure and cross-departmental needs. Ryan Phillips was appointed to assist Tobias in offering day-to-day IT support to the IMMAF team.

INTERNAL SYSTEMS

The IMMAF administrative team, board and all committees and commissions were onboarded onto the Microsoft Teams platform, as a secure, central hub for e-mail communications, document sharing, video conferencing and shared diaries.

WEBMASTER

On the building of a new website (by ManMade) as part of IMMAF's brand refresh, IMMAF hired a webmaster, Rav Ravvet, specialising in graphic design, to manage on-brand content and development across the IMMAF website, IMMAF

TV and the IMMAF App, reporting to the IMMAF Communications Director

IMMAF DIGITAL PARTNERS

Global Sport Technology (GST):

- IMMAF partnered with GST for the provision of a new Customer Relations Management, Progression Scheme and Tournament Management System, currently being piloted among select federations
- A "Member Package" is targeted at individual sport participants signing up to their National Federations (for example, when they sign up at a member gym)
- A revenue share model allows for National Federations and IMMAF to profit from the registration of individual members in respective countries, while offering an attractive package for new members with marketing support from IMMAF
- IMMAF Courses, Course Materials, the Gradings System, Licenses and Registration for IMMAF Championships will soon solely be accessible through the Membership Package and Platform
- Access for members to IMMAF TV PPV content is to be included, as well as other special offers on products and event tickets, for example

SPORTRADAR:

- IMMAF's OTT partnership with Sportradar has continued into 2020 with various recommendations from the Broadcast Strategy Plan to be implemented to improve user-experience on the platform
- COVID-19 wrought the cancellation of events with just the Oceania Championships streamed in 2020. There was no budget for further content creation for the platform this year
- Sportradar has been working with GST on IT solutions to render IMMAF TV content seamlessly available as part of the GST "Member Package"

- IMMAF has facilitated a partnership between Sportradar and Kiswe, which will allow for third parties (including National Federations) to source live streams of IMMAF Championships and add their own live commentary, broadcast on their own platforms. IMMAF has assisted the development of Sportradar/Kiswe platforms integration by engaging M1 commentators in testing pilots using IMMAF TV streams. IMMAF hopes to launch the offering to members with its next Tier 2 Championships
- Research was carried out into the possibility of creating an API that would allow IMMAF TV PPV content to be accessed also via the IMMAF App on mobile phones

IMMAF APP:

The IMMAF App was launched officially in 2020 and has been promoted primarily through the IMMAF Coaching and Grading Courses, for which sign-up is a requirement. With 5,000 users from 77 national federations registered on the App so far, the number of sign-ups is expected to continue increasing in tandem with registrants to IMMAF coaching and grading courses.

BIG TICKET INVESTMENTS 2021

To secure and protect its data and assets and facilitate commercial growth, IMMAF is committed to the following IT investments in 2021:

- Data warehouse: for the secure, centralisation of all IMMAF data as sourced or utilised by IMMAF's client-facing partner/licensed platforms and own administration/events teams
- Content Management Platform: for centralised storage of IMMAF multimedia assets, allowing fast, automated access by licensees (including National Federations and athletes with different levels of access permission)
- Athlete database: to make IMMAF athlete information and histories publicly available via an accessible, user-friendly platform or platform development



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