

2019 General Assembly Minutes

International Mixed Martial Arts Federation General Assembly, Manama, Bahrain, 2019

Date: 15/11/2019

Location: Wyndham Grand Hotel, Manama

Present:

IMMAF Directors:

Tom Madsen, Raymond Philips, Wissam Abi Nadder, Frank Babcock, Bertrand Amoussou, George Sallfeldt, August Wallen, Stewart Brain

Invitees:

IMMAF President Kerrith Brown, WMMAA President Vadim Finkelchtein, CEO Densign White, Tatiana Klimenko, Svetlana Odintsova, Denitza Batchvarova, Han Jiuli, Galimzhan Yessenov, Michelle Verroken, Prof Dan Healy, Andrew Moshanov, Nick Davies,

IMMAF Federations: Hocine Mesboua (Algeria), Richy Cranny (Australia), Rovsham Gasanov (Azerbaijan), Mohamed A. Qamber (Bahrain), Aleh Miliakov (Belarus), Stanislav Nedkov, Veronica Nalbatska (Bulgaria), Guy Bertrand Olomo (Cameroon), Qias Bo (China), Jaime Baron (Colombia), Michal Hamrsmid (Czech Republic), Majimawa Wilfred (DRC), Khaled Abde Hamid (Egypt), Marc Goddard (England), Vallo Hannus (Estonia), Heikki Kaijalainen (Finland), Hayzia Bellem, Geiser (France) Clemens Werner Lutz (Germany), Collins Kofi Zoiku (Ghana), Andrew Wai Men Chan (Hong Kong), Sharif Bapu (India), Anindra Ardiansyah Bakrie (Indonesia), Raad Jameel Abass (Iraq), Liam Og-Griffin (Ireland), Vito Paollito (Italy), Maskazu Sakai, Shinji Nishimura (Japan), Gamlizhan Yessenov (Kazakhstan), Aleksandr Golenko (Kyrgyzstan), Nadim Nassif, El Hage Abdou (Lebanon), Rashid Salleh (Malaysia), Ramtohol Avinash (Mauritius), Raul Salas Navarro (Mexico), Terry Hill (New Zealand) Eusebio Rivera (Panama), Jahangir Riaz (Pakistan), Martin Lewandowski (Poland), Luis Barneto (Portugal), (Russia), Abdulaziz Osama Julaidan (Saudi Arabia), Bertus Coetzee (South Africa), Antonio Garcia (Spain). Jorgen Hamberg (Sweden), Luigi Perillo (Switzerland), Jason Fraser (Trinidad & Tobago), Amin Nacheb (Tunisia), Anton Blank (Ukraine), Karl Keller (UAE), Danny Corr (Northern Ireland), Ryan Brueggeman (USA) (48 total members present)

- IMMAF CEO Densign White welcomed all delegates to an historic edition of the General Assembly, where two organizations (International Mixed Martial Arts Federation and World Mixed Martial Arts Association) joined to become one International Federation.
- DW thanked the Presidents for their ongoing support, and especially for participating in IMMAF - WMMAA Championships which offered a fantastic global showcase for the sport of amateur MMA.
- DW made a roll call and guided the delegates through the GA meeting agenda points.
- The 5 continents were all represented. There were a total number of 32 full members present and registered with the right to vote at the 2019 General Assembly.
- As per IMMAF statutes the required quorum of 50% + 1 was achieved, and the General Assembly was able to commence.
- DW confirmed that all registered Full Members had received their voting cards.

Voting cards:

Green for YES

Red for NO

Orange for ABSTAIN

1. **Vote to approve the agenda,**
 - YES: All
 - NO: None
 - ABSTAIN: None

The agenda was approved.

Opening of the meeting

President Kerrith Brown opening remarks

- **KB** thanked all attending National Federation Presidents for being active participants on a historic day. This in turn was part of a journey to develop and promote amateur MMA so it may one day become an Olympic Sport.
- **KB** said the journey of IMMAF was launched in 2021 thanks to the vision of August Wallen and George Sallfeldt. This vision allowed us to protect the values of the sport on the path to recognition.
- **KB** continued that it gives him great pleasure to see so many familiar faces who had been part of the journey for seven years. Athletes and coaches, men and women have all been committed to develop MMA as a recognized sport. IMMAF has achieved a lot in recent years, despite a number of setbacks but there would be many challenges still to come.
- **KB** underlined the fact that everybody gathered in the Assembly Room had an important part to play. They must all work to protect the next generation of MMA participants, since young people represented the future. By staying strong and united, IMMAF will deliver. It is not only about competition but about having the right structures, with education programmes and pathways for coaches, judges, referees, cut teams, volunteers and others.
- **KB** added that during this journey, great efforts have been made to have strengthen governance, and IMMAF has now put procedures in place to make sure that governance is transparent and exemplary. Even if some national federations chose to leave IMMAF, many others have joined.
- **KB** then announced that there would be changes to the IMMAF Board of Directors with new board members joining due to the agreement between IMMAF and WMMAA.
- **KB** gave special thanks to WMMAA President Vadim Finkelchtein for his vision and hard work and reiterated that all federations were responsible for IMMAF's success. **KB** said the priority now was to continue the drive to gain GAISF recognition, and to represent the interests of the younger generation, such as the ground-breaking decision to remove headshots from youth competitions – unique in combat sports.
- **KB** added that the Championships calendar shows the progress of international development.
- **KB** thanked UFC for having the vision to back IMMAF from the start and give ongoing support as well as the owner of sponsor partner Green Hill, **Jahangir Riaz** for his support over recent years.
- **KB** concluded that he was very proud to be IMMA President. He pledged to give IMMAF values which he had learned from a lifetime in sport including, honour, respect and friendship. **KB** said that everyone involved in IMMAF had Olympic values.

- KB thanked the IMMAF staff, CEO, and everyone present for giving him the opportunity to be here today.

Election of the scrutineers.

DW introduced the scrutineers:

Luis Barneto – Portugal
Nick Davies – United Kingdom
Clemens Werner – Germany

1. **Vote to approve scrutineers,**
 - YES All
 - NO None
 - ABSTAIN None

- Scrutineers were appointed.

2. **Vote to approve Minutes of General Assembly 17 November 2017,**
 - YES 31
 - NO 0
 - ABSTAIN 1

- Minutes were approved

3. **Vote to approve Minutes Extraordinary General Assembly 16 November 2018,**
 - YES 30
 - NO
 - ABSTAIN 2

- Minutes were approved

4. **Vote to approve Minutes Extraordinary General Assembly 21 June 2019,**
 - YES 30
 - NO 0
 - ABSTAIN 2

- Minutes were approved

5. Voting for Expulsion of Members

Action had been taken to suspend five members. The IMMAF Board of Directors made this decision based on available evidence. General Assembly voted to ratify the decision.

National Federation	Yes	No	Abstain	
Paraguay	30	0	2	Approved
Poland	31	0	1	Approved
Singapore	31	0	1	Approved
Turkey	28	0	4	Approved
UK	29	0	3	Approved

The expulsions were approved.

Activity report

- DW presented an IMMAF activity report prepared in 2019. The report was available in an electronic version and hard copies were also distributed. New policies have been introduced in areas such as anti-corruption and betting regulation, conflict of interest, detection and prevention of money laundering and other policies. All are available on request for Federation use.
- DW said that sport, in general, has become a magnet for criminal activities. Although no specific problems had come to the attention of IMMAF, as a role model for good governance these processes are required.

Anti-doping

- Anti-doping is carried out by consultant Michelle Verroken. Anti-doping sanctions are in line with world anti-doping policies, anti-doping education is ongoing with seminars at IMMAF technical conferences and information given to coaches and athletes during the Championships. A new online education programme is being considered.

Membership update

- International Member Liaison Gosha Malik presented charts showing National Federation membership breakdown. It is important to IMMAF to gain a significant body of members who have been recognized by Government authorities and/or Olympic Committees. IMMAF has 42 National Federation supported by the Government or Olympic authorities at present. The validity of some documents has been questioned by GAISF, however, so a process of due diligence is now ongoing.
- GM said an increasing number of federations were gaining government support and France, a major sport nation, is expecting official recognition early in 2020.
- DW insisted that Federations concentrate on youth development, and that the changes to safety regulations should made a big difference to youth participation.

Sports Development

- Director of Sport Development, Andrew Moshanov has finalized a programme of coach progression, offering another level of membership to the coaches of national federations. AM surmised that it is not good to have coaches coming from other sports with their single discipline qualifications. MMA needs its own development. The IMMAF certification unlocked participation and revenue streams for Federations.
- AM said that parents want children to be coached by qualified coaches. IMMAF concentrated on competitions in the past, but a number of competitors is very small compared to the number of MMA practitioners. The majority of people do MMA as a recreational, rather than competition activity, and we need to change the mindset.

Regulatory Development

- Director of Regularity Affairs, Marc Goddard is developing international certification for Judges and Referees. The IMMAF method of training and certifying officials globally is being recognised. Third Party sanctioning is to be introduced.
- MG is involved in setting up a new governing body in England to replace the old UKMMAF.

Championship Report

- Director of Events, Alistair Pettitt confirmed that 2019 was the most successful year for IMMAF Championships, with events held on all five continents of Oceania, Africa, Pan-America, Europe and Asia.
- AP congratulated Italian Federation representative Vito Paolillo for hosting both European and Youth Championships.
- AP said that the Pan-Am in Bahamas and current World Championship in Bahrain have exceeded expectations. Participation continues to improve year on year, with women's participation increasing significantly.

Brand, Communication and Commercial

- Director Isobel Carnwath noted that IMMAF has increased its media presence in 2019. Growing in markets such as France, Bahrain and the U.K. With increased coverage, IMMAF has also invested more in broadcast content, with a highlights package commissioned for a number of regions.
- IC said IMMAF.tv is live streaming the World Championships around the world.
- IC also informed that developments and investment has been made into digital platforms, too, with a dedicated social media agency, as well as official photographers for championships.

Regions Report

France – Bertrand Amoussou stated that France has banned MMA since 2016. There are still no official competitions allowed and MMA is restricted to academies. The Ministry of Sport has finally decided to open the door to a full recognition of MMA and several combat sports were invited to make an application in order to become the umbrella body for a fledgling MMA organization. An independent jury will make a decision about which federation will take MMA within their structure from 1st of January 2020.

Norway – Vice President George Sallfeldt explained that a knock-out law forbids any combat sport with KO possibilities in Norway. However, the legislation is changing on individual cases and the authorities can approve certain matches. A meeting took place at the Norwegian parliament a couple of months ago and talks are progressing in the right direction. It is important to become recognized and legal in Norway.

Ireland – DW explained how an unfortunate fatal accident at an MMA competition a few years made the Government accept the need for proper regulation of MMA. However, no existing sports organizations expressed any interest in regulating MMA. Funding has become available to help an MMA federation build their administrative structures. The first General Assembly of an Irish federation has taken place and progress is being made on governance. It is difficult for any federation who rely totally on volunteers. IMMAF is helping to bolster the Federation.

Directors Report

Oceania – Director Stewart Brain thanked all attending very successful Championships in Australia and New Zealand. An invitation was extended for members to participate in next year's events in Gold Coast. SB thanked Officials for making their way to the continent to help with their work. UFC events had a record attendance which proves that MMA is already popular in Australia and New Zealand and will continue to grow.

Africa – Director Raymond Philips announced that Africa is no longer the forgotten continent. Despite all the challenges around resources and infrastructure he is proud to helping to build teams which can make Africa’s events bigger and better. African MMA is rising fast and allows a new generation to build lasting relationships from participation in events.

Asia – Director Wissam Abi Nadder thanked Bahrain for hosting such a great event, seeing high growth in athlete participation. In parallel the participation and popularity of the sport has grown following the development in this region. This includes the first Chinese athlete winning a championship in UFC, which will bring even higher popularity for the sport of MMA.

America – Director Frank Babcock thanked Bahrain for a fantastic event, growing participation around the world and commended the first Pan-American event which will grow year on year in the Pan-American region.

Financial Matters

- The reports were sent electronically to all participants, with hard copies also distributed.
- Financial Report 2017 - Finished with a loss of SEK 32 568. (Note the currency is Swedish Crowns).
- A detailed breakdown was listed including Personnel Cost, Distribution Costs and Administration Expenses. The financial situation improved in 2018, showing a profit for that year.
- It is important to note that IMMAF is covering accumulated losses, caused by IMMAF investments in IMMAF Championships since IMMAF covers costs of the host federation. IMMAF made a commitment in 2019 to allocate \$10K for each event to cover operational costs.
- DW suggested having an annual General Meeting, rather than reports every 2 years, since this will allow for better control and analysis of annual expenditure.
- The Auditor’s report was attached to the hard copies, IMMAF Board Directors signed all the financial reports.
- After asking for comments from the floor (there were none) DW requested a vote to approve the accounts for 2017/2018.
 - 1. Vote to approve the 2017/2018 Accounts**
 - YES 32
 - NO 0
 - ABSTAIN 0
- Accounts and Reports were approved.

Budget 2020

- DW stated that the forecast of income included sponsorship from UFC (\$1million), Championship Entry Fees (\$600K), Hosting Rights Fees (\$250K) Membership Fees (\$94K) and Safejaws (\$3,7K)

- DW said IMMAF should expect higher expenditure. The majority of this would be for salaries for staff, since more contractors have been appointed as the scope and nature of IMMAF work continues to grow. Other expenditures include,
- Insurance for Directors, Public Liability, and lobbying costs related to the recognition quest and participation at international sport conferences like SportAccord and Sportel.
- DW explained the cost to run Championships is not completely covered by the entry fee and IMMAF covered the difference every year. The standard of Championships has become very high, but this means higher costs. At present there a small surplus has been forecast, which might change as this is only an estimate.

1. Vote to approve the 2020 Budget

- YES 32
- NO 0
- ABSTAIN 0

- The 2020 Budget was approved.

6. Vote to approve Auditors Reports 2017 and 2018

- YES 32
- NO 0
- ABSTAIN 0

- Auditors Reports 2017 and 2018 were approved.

7. Vote to approve Senora Auditors to audit 2019 Accounts

- YES 32
- NO 0
- ABSTAIN 0

- Senora Auditors (name of company) was approved to audit the 2019 Accounts.

- (Additional Item on the agenda approved by Board of Directors to move the IMMAF registration to Switzerland.)

8. Vote to move Company Registration to Switzerland

- YES 32
- NO 0
- ABSTAIN 0

- Moving the Company registration to Switzerland was approved.

Voting, appointments, and elections.

- According to IMMAF Statutes Art 24.2, during elections of the President and the Board of Directors, the President must step down from chairing the meeting, the Board proposed that August Wallen would continue to chair the meeting during the elections.

1. Vote to accept August Wallen to chair the meeting

- YES 32
- NO 0
- ABSTAIN 0

- August Wallen was accepted to chair the meeting

- DW handed over the meeting to August Wallen.

Voting for the election of IMMAF President

- President Kerrith Brown confirmed it was his honour to run for Presidency and thanked everyone for great support.
- Vadim Finkelchtein, who had lost his voice due to illness, apologized for being unable to speak. He asked Andrew Moshanov to deliver a message on his behalf.
- VF stated that It had been a long journey for him personally and for the sport of MMA, even though it is still a young sport compared to most others. There are people in this room whom he has personally known for nearly 20 years and people in this room who he is meeting the first time in his life. The sport is growing regardless of any circumstances and personalities.
- VF said he came up with the idea to form the World MMA Association around 2012 to shape and protect the sport which become more widespread and should stand alone apart from other combat sports. Soon after, IMMAF was formed and adopted the same vision and goals.
- VF said both entities made remarkable achievements. Both organizations applied for a membership with GAISF and from the first meeting with KB and DW, he knew that he was talking to people who shared his vision, so an action plan was made to merge.
- VF said that meetings took place with a discussion of needs and intentions from both parties. In very few countries the process did not go as smoothly as hoped but there was an overwhelming majority where national federations were able to put their personal interests aside in the interest of the sport to unite.
- VF said the journey taken has fulfilled him, especially now that IMMAF-WMMAA is unified, and that it was the right time for him to move on. VF invited KB to the podium.
- VF Statement: "In the light of the election of the president of the united international governing body I want to ask the delegates not to consider myself for position of President in favour of Mr. Brown, because I truly believe his energy, dedication, passion, knowledge of sport, governance means he can do a better job than I can."
- AW confirmed that VF was formally removing himself from the election process which meant that KB would be the sole remaining candidate.

2. Vote to elect Mr. Kerrith Brown as IMMAF President

- YES 32
 - NO 0
 - ABSTAIN 0
- Mr. Kerrith Brown was confirmed as IMMAF President.
 - KB thanked the GA for their support, and VF for putting his trust in him.

3. Election for Vice President George Sallfeldt

- YES 32
 - NO 0
 - ABSTAIN 0
- GS was confirmed as IMMAF Vice President

9. Election for Board of Directors

Director Name	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	
Mr. Bertrand Amoussou	32	0	0	Approved
Me. Stuart Brain	32	0	0	Approved
Ms. Tatiana Klimenko	32	0	0	Approved
Mr. Raymond Phillips	32	0	0	Approved
Mr. Tom Madsen	32	0	0	Approved
Mr. Wissam Abi Nader	32	0	0	Approved
Mr Galimzhan Yessenov	32	0	0	Approved

- IMMAF Board of Directors was approved.

10. Non Executive Members appointed by the board

Director Name	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	
Ms Deni Batchvarova	32	0	0	Approved
Mr Victor Frolov	32	0	0	Approved
Mr. Han Jiuli	32	0	0	Approved
Mr. Iskander Karim	32	0	0	Approved
Ms. Svetlana Odintsova	32	0	0	Approved

11. Election of Financial Audit Committee

Name	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	
Mr Denis Rowan (Ireland)	32	0	0	Approved
Mr. Cristiano Gadelha (Brazil)	32	0	0	Approved
Ms. Svetlana Odintsova (Netherlands)	32	0	0	Approved

- The Financial Audit Committee was approved.

12. Election of Arbitration Committee

Name	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	
Mr Rupert Beloff (UK)	31	0	0	Approved
Mr. Thomas Rudkin (UK)	31	0	0	Approved
Mr. Eusebio Rivera (Panama)	31	0	0	Approved
Mr. Mathieu Laplante-Goulet (Canada)	31	0	0	Approved

- The Arbitration Committee was approved.

13. Election of Anti - Doping Committee

Name	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	
Ms Michele Verroken (UK)	31	0	0	Approved
Mr. Max Shephard (UK)	31	0	0	Approved
Dr. Jack Kreindler (UK)	31	0	0	Approved
Mr. David Wang (US)	31	0	0	Approved
Ms. Veronika Nalbatska (Bulgaria)	31	0	0	Approved

- The Anti-Doping Committee was approved.

- In order to address the appeal's process, the Anti-Doping Disciplinary Committee was agreed, as explained by MV it is essential according to the World Anti-Doping Code that the disciplinary side should be separated from the policy part, so appeals would go to the court of arbitration for sport. It is helpful for athletes and coaches who might need to appeal.

14. Election of Anti - Doping Disciplinary Committee

Name	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	
Ms Michele Verroken (UK)	32	0	0	Approved
Mr. Max Shephard (UK)	32	0	0	Approved
Dr. Prem Kumar (Malaysia)	32	0	0	Approved
Mr. Andrew Smith (UK)	32	0	0	Approved

- The Anti-Doping Disciplinary Committee was approved.

15. Election of Disciplinary Committee

Name	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	
Mr. William Lexton Jones (UK)	32	0	0	Approved
Mr. Thomas Rudkin (UK)	32	0	0	Approved
Mr Stanislav Netkov (BUL)	32	0	0	Approved

- The Disciplinary Committee was approved.

16. Election of Nomination Committee

Name	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	
Mr. Jasper Gunarson Sweden	31	0	0	Approved
Mr. Clemens Werner Germany	31	0	0	Approved
Mr. John Daniel South Africa	31	0	0	Approved

- The Nomination Committee was approved.
- The voting was completed and GS explained the role of Committees. The Committees are required by IMMAF status and they are elected by a General Assembly. IMMAF also appointed commissions and these are nominated by the Board of Directors.

New Members Application

- DW presented a list of new Members awaiting full membership approval from General Assembly.

Country	Federation Full name	President Name
Argentina	Asociacion Argentina de MMA	Marcelo Daniel Martinez
Algeria	The Algerian Federation of Kick Boxing, M.M.A. and Similar Sports	Abbas Assid
Congo	Democratic Republic of Congo MMA Federation (DRCMMAF)	Baygon Bombomba
England	England Mixed Martial Arts Assassination	Marc Goddard
French Polynesia	Wrestling Polynesian Federation MMA and Associated Disciplines	Hiro Lemaire
Ghana	Ghana Mixed Martial Arts Federation (GHAMMAF)	Collins Kofi Zoiku
Hong Kong	Hong Kong (China) MMA Federation Ltd	Andrew Wai Men Chan
Indonesia	Indonesia Committee for Martial Art Sports / Komite Olahraga Beladiri Indonesia – KOBBI	Anindra Ardiansyah Bakrie
Iraq	Iraq champion fighting cage MMA	Raad Jameel Abass
Mauritius	Mixed Martial Arts Federation Mauritius	Ramtohil Avinash
Morocco	Fédération Royal Marocaine du Sport de Combat libre et Mixte	Hamza El Harchali
Poland	Stowarzyszenie MMA Polska	Martin Lewandowski
Saudi Arabia	Saudi Mixed Martial Arts Federation	Abdulaziz Osama Julaidan
Switzerland	Federation Switzerland Mixed Martial Arts	Luigi Perillo
Trinidad &Tobago	Trinidad and Tobago Mixed Martial Arts Federation	Jason Fraser
Tunisia	Tunisian Mixed Martial Arts Federation	Amin Nacheb
Wales UK	MIXED MARTIAL ARTS CYMRU	Chris Rees

17. Vote for Full Membership Approval

- New Member Federations were approved as a Full Members.
- DW closed the meeting.

Next meeting date and time TBC