

## Minutes IMMAF board meeting

Date: Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Time: 2pm London GMT

Location: Hotel Italia Palace, Lignano Sabbiadoro, Italy.

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Roll Call</b></p> <p>Wissam Abinader (WA), Bertrand Amoussou (BA), Denitza Batchvarova (DB), Stewart Brain (SB), Kerrith Brown (KB), Vadim Finkelstein (VF), Han Jiuli (HJ), Iskander Karim (IK), Tatiana Klimenko (TK), Tom Madsen (TM), Svetlana Odintsova (SO), Raymond Phillips (RP), George Sallfeldt (GS), August Wallen (AW),</p> <p>In Attendance: Densign White (DW), Nicolas Davies (ND), Gosha Malik (GM), Jas Sohal (JS) online. Marc Goddard (MG) AT 4:30 PM.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Apologies / Absent</b></p> <p>Apologies: Iskander Karim (IK), Viktor Frolov (VF)</p> <p>Absentees: None</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Conflicts of Interests</b></p> <p>Declared by KB, TM, WA</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Presidents Opening remarks (KB)</b></p> <p>KB welcomed all Directors to the European championships here in Italy. He welcomed DB and SB joining online.</p> <p>Much work has been done to engage with representatives from The IOC through and GAISF president Ivo Ferriani.</p>	

	<p>KB will continue to build on a relationship with WAKO.</p> <p>Kosovo</p> <p>KB met with with the sports minister and representatives of the Olympic committee.</p> <p>An agreement has been signed for a potential deal i.e., accommodate an agent that will sell the rights to the championship exclusively.</p> <p>We managed to get an upfront payment of €100K</p> <p>UFC have front funded another \$500K on the 2023 contract raising this to \$1M in total.</p> <p>KB is focused on funding from Qatar, Saudi regions as there are limited opportunities of resources in other regions.</p> <p>We have signed a three-year deal of half a million for the world youth. The recent championship was amazing event with over 500 Youth.</p> <p>We can thank UAE for doing such a fantastic job. For the first time five cages. There were a few complications on the first day however was resolved on day two.</p> <p>KB intends on being in Saudi in November attempting to recover the initial 3–5-year deal of hosting the worlds championships.</p> <p>We will not push any host nations however need to hold two world championships in 2023 on the basis that we will have all our continents ready.</p> <p>Continents prepared: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Africa</li> <li>• New Zealand for Oceania</li> <li>• Europeans in Poland with KSW under The European games.</li> <li>• Mexico - Pan AMS in Montreal</li> <li>• Asian Championships - Kazakhstan 2023 (The contract has been signed and paid their hosting rights fees in the terms of the last agreement which covered all the cost). Currently Kazakhstan is experiencing some political issues, therefore difficult at present to negotiate a new deal.</li> </ul> <p>Another example is the Asian championships (end of October 2022), hosted by Tajikistan who have stepped in and looking to cover all the cost, therefore there</p>	
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is no official outlay. Because of the situation with Russia, flights have increased enormously e.g., from US\$300 to US\$1, 500. This does not assist with their budget for staffing, which is what we aware one of the new challenges they face.

We have the continental structures in place, starting out with Asia because of the concerns with the OCA (Olympic Council for Asia). They have decided to try and involve MMA into the Asia games but without working with IMMAF.

KB will be visiting Vietnam 21st October for clarification e.g. are they working with rivals and also ensure professionalism.

KB concluded by stating that the situation is complex and UFC have concerns with regards to our relationship with OCA.

DB – stated we have 2 main concerns which are: -

The definition of MMA – technically MMA is not yet defined in the eyes of GAISF or IOC, therefore the path the OCA are heading will result in defining MMA, for sure in Asia of which potentially, if they do have the connections and move on, that could be the definition of MMA around the world. Even though there is a difference between amateur and professional competition of which we have seen in a number of our sports, we are concerned that definition of MMA could cause problems from a commercial perspective for us, not only in Asia but ultimately all over the world. Our concern is MMA will eventually be defined in an official capacity with GAISF and the IOC in a way that does not fit with how we operate. For example, having the sport happening in a boxing ring instead of a cage, which is a major issue for us, it's the fact we are facing someone redefining what the sport actually is in a way it would impact how professional MMA would be. There's the path of educating the team and OCA and building a bridge as much as possible, hence why we are suggesting we invite them to Abu Dhabi, we connect them with Mark and other individuals within our organisation who are very close to the rules. We are aware that the octagon and the rules of MMA are created for the health and safety of the athletes and something we strongly advocate. The ring we all know is not a safe environment for our sport as currently defined. Hence the two issues we see: -

- a) Education – we need to continuously meet with them and create new opportunities for that team to get educated on the sport
- b) Leverage the information – for KB to continue in what he is doing by leveraging the situation to push for IMMAF quick recognition with GAISF and IOC.

The unfortunate reality is we cannot rely on anything coming from that organisation; therefore, we need to continue to work on both sides to steer in the right direction and work on the recognition we have all been working towards during the past ten years.

We are potentially re-defining the sport, the rules of the sport. Not only in China and if successful could be a global situation – this is not good for any of us involved.

GS stated he is worried about the situation and asked if we were pulling our resources, do we have enough and if we need to be careful this does not become a money game.

DB responded by stating she agrees with GS and that it's important we continue to educate them on the merit of the sport and how it operates and is defined today. DB also stated that is important for KB and DW to pool in on their relationships within the networking they have built so far to accelerate the process.

KB concluded by stating a lot of work is required by the national federations to educate them in order that they fully understand the sport and what we are trying to achieve for recognition. Also, to educate others around us in making them aware we do not want restricted with unacceptable rules to get into the Olympic games. This is the biggest part of educating others.

This thing is moving rapidly, hence we need to move quickly.

AW agrees with DB in that we should have plan A, B and C as we need to continue our development and growth regardless of recognition and the Olympics, we need to keep on pushing what we. We should have a special plan

	<p>on the defining of the sport. How do we define our definition of the sport is what counts. We should be clear on the specific definition of MMA. AW also highlighted some rules which may have been defined by cultural reasons rather than safety.</p> <p>GS asked through the UFC push the format and push that its MMA, so that everything else feels as if its newly created. Is there any communication strategy we can put in this and push everywhere. DW and KB responded by stating we did run a campaign.</p> <p>WB stated we require the UFC to be supporting us a little more on our athletes which will boost our battle.</p> <p>DB responded by stating she is not sure of the suggestion of a campaign about what MMA is or what amateur MMA is a practical way forward for us in being successful. DB happy to think through other tactics that we could deploy. The education continues in our definition of which is the health and safety of athletes.</p> <p>There is no going straight from IMMAF to UFC today. The level of talent in IMMAF has improved sufficiently, athletes are not in the position to introduce them to UFC. Maybe in a few years as the sport continues to grow the gap may shorten. I think we continue to highlight achievements of athlete's growth so that we have this noted. It is not something that is easily available for our research teams to pick up.</p> <p>We as UFC are the leader in the space, we are what every child wants to end up. We are defining what MMA is, with 42 events a year, 13 bouts on average. Therefore, the fact there are groups out there who are willing to redefine what the sport looks like at the amateur level but call it the same thing does not make sense.</p> <p>KB concluded he will keep all informed.</p>	
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes of the previous meetings 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022 were APPROVED:</b> Proposed by DB and seconded by RP.</p>	

6.	<p><b>Actions from the previous meeting minutes</b></p> <p>Feedback from Tri-partite hosting agreement – completed by DB.</p>	
7.	<p><b>CEO Report (DW)</b> <i>(‘CEO Report September 2022’ distributed pre-meeting)</i></p> <p><b>IMMAF Structure</b> Trying to get the new structure registered on the commercial register in Switzerland. KB and DW on a call this morning with the notary. The documents requiring signatures will be arriving this week.</p> <p><b>SIGA Integrity Week – held in Portugal</b> A good attendance. Engaged with a lot of interesting attendees of which we will make further contact with, particularly the United Nations representative who is keen to work with us on some of their current projects. Met with the new director of European broadcasting union. A new free channel is being worked on with a possibility of us getting involved. There was a discussion on the SIGA independent rating verification survey (SIRVS). A member of the British standards institute was also at the meeting, we will arrange a follow up meeting and start the preparation work for the audit.</p> <p><b>Banking</b> The account was due to be closed on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2022, however we have arranged for a further 30 day extension. Working on opening an account in Switzerland of which is taking longer than expected. Not sure of the reasons behind the delay.</p> <p><b>My Next Match</b> This has come to a close and we are no longer able to access the system. The system let us down at the Youth World Championships, this led to us changing within 24hrs to using Smooth Comp which does not have the expansive elements to filter as ‘My Next Match’ did, for example the number of nations participation, the number of athletes etc.</p>	

<p>We are planning a trip to Smooth Comp Sweden between the 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> October 2022.</p> <p>We managed to retrieve all of our data of which the impact for change over is minimal.</p> <p>We are in dispute regarding an unpaid invoice of which is not the responsibility of IMMAF, however in order to move forward and maintain a good working relationship, upon approval of the board, we may pay and try to recover from Bahrain who the invoice should have been directed.</p> <p><b>IMMAF Transgender thought leadership event 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022</b></p> <p>A Norwegian transgender athlete was on the panel. Interesting discussions which is available in the CEO report distributed.</p> <p>Our policy has not changed; however, we want to be inclusive and will be looking at ways to achieve inclusivity. A proposal was to hold an open event. DW not sure how that would work on a practical level but looking to explore all options.</p> <p><b>UFC</b></p> <p>The extra enhanced funding on the '23 Agreement'. This was signed and returned.</p> <p><b>Youth Championships</b></p> <p>This was a huge success which almost doubled since 2019. The standard and quality was good and continues to improve. Based on this DW stated we can expect a further growth in 2023 and mentioned there appears to be equal numbers of females as male competitors.</p> <p>DW stated in response to the question of plans to increase weight categories that there are no current plans to change, as the existing ones and any new introductions so far are not full to capacity. For now, the growth is in women's MMA as currently this is very small. DW remarked that in the world championships level we are getting 8 to 12. We are not up to the 32 maximum level that we could get in the female bracket. DW concluded these should be filled before looking at expanded the men's.</p>	
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Further discussion took place regarding the dropping of weight and the risk.

**IMMAF Nationality Rules Proposal**

*(Full details contained in the 'National Rules' document distributed pre meeting)*

There has been some issues with countries bringing in athletes at the last minute, giving them passports to represent their countries, the objective here is to try and control the situation and have some cooling off periods.

It's mandatory that competitors participate in IMMAF championships are nationals of the country they represent e.g., if participating for the UK, competitors hold a UK passport and not the passport of another country, however a recent decision was made for a participate who held a passport for the country of his birth, however lived in another country since a young infant. The evidence was provided with a residency document.

Concern was raised about Ukraine refugees. DW stated so far, no issues have occurred and athletes want to represent their country.

It was suggested that the participants should be required to contact IMMAF to be considered as the first step.

*(End of CEO brief overview of his report)*

**Marc Goddard (MG)– Proposal**

KB thanked MG for attending the meeting.

There was an incident this week with a young female from Ukraine who is 20 years old, it was discovered she had a pro-record or reportedly fought professionally. Under the professional rules, she went to 3 rounds and was defeated. Under the current rules she has had these fights under the current criteria of which do not allow her to compete. MG appeal to the board in regard to owing to the sport and that we owe to the youngsters to not turn our back on them.



<p>MG believes IMMAF should be following the professional boxing model. We can make decisions on a case-by-case basis and be able to set out some pragmatic criteria which does not need to be too involved. MG concern is, some youngsters may have been misguided and unknowingly come through the improper channels or perhaps they had made choices which were not smart due to lack of knowledge around IMMAF rules etc.</p> <p>The young lady mentioned earlier had change her last name. The passport was the name we found.</p> <p>MG stated if a young person has had a pro fight, one pro win then there is no need for further discussion.</p> <p>If in the real life scenario mentioned above, MG's recommendation is, youngsters who have had no more than 3 fights are considered if they had lost at a maximum all the 3 fights without other factors. IMMAF give a second chance to the youngsters as to not end their involvement in the sport where possible they have no other options.</p> <p>MG stated we are into the sport and ethically have a welcoming approach, similar to how professional boxing in the UK operate on limitation.</p> <p>MG feels we would be in a much better place to serve the sport, educate the youngsters and the gyms through the national federations if we adopt this policy.</p> <p>GS stated, this had been looked at previously and consequently abused. We would need to look at how we have governance around this topic. We didn't have the resources at the time of making a decision, maybe we have the resources now to reopen a review and find good solutions.</p> <p>Further discussions took place exploring various options in the direction for MG,s proposal, there were also opposition at this current moment.</p>	
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	<b>APPROVED:</b> Working group to be set up	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Governance Update (ND).</b> <i>(Not covered during this meeting)</i>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Finance report (JS)</b> Management accounts, 1 July to 31 August 2022. Turnover: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Championship Fees – July \$3,366. Related to youth championships. \$120,605 August for the Europeans</li> <li>• Sponsorship figure is steady \$83,333</li> <li>• Other miscellaneous income relates to other sponsorship. August \$15,865</li> <li>• Hosting rights – zero in July, \$94,725 in August was a deposit</li> </ul> Cost of sales: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular payments e.g. residential office remuneration, other related office cost</li> <li>• Contractors - \$989 July, \$2,996. Much lower than prior years as some specific contractors were moved a little lower down the financials</li> </ul> b) Expenditure: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events \$20,691 July, \$10,629 August. Waiting for some further expenses for the European championships of which will be included in September and October's report</li> <li>• Advertising \$17,764 July, \$23,850 August</li> <li>• IT - \$12,446 July, \$7,792 August includes 'My Next Match'.</li> <li>• Fixtures and fittings \$550 July, \$527 August</li> </ul> c) Profit and Loss: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$39,178 July, \$170,120 August</li> </ul> d) Summary of balance as of 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2022: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening Balance \$2,707.04</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash Flow In \$811,327.47</li> <li>• Cash Flow Out \$443,019.30</li> <li>• Closing balance \$371.015.21</li> </ul>	
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>Membership (GM)</b></p> <p><b>APPROVED: -</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kosovo</li> <li>• Korea – good chance they will get recognition from their government</li> <li>• Madagascar - very good connection, very active, they have recognition from MMA.</li> <li>• Palestine have Olympic recognition. Recognition recommended by WA .</li> </ul> <p>Discussions around the political issues faced in some of the countries we approve and maybe GM could share information with the board of which we should have a discussion.</p> <p>GM has suggested having a separate meeting to discuss due to time limitations for this meeting.</p>	
<b>11.</b>	<p><b>Risk register (DW)</b></p> <p>DW stated we are growing as an organisation and our expenditure is outstretching income. We are lucky to have had the UFC for the past 10 years however they have indicated the 2023 agreement is the last one.</p> <p>We need to accelerate and look at commercializing getting the money in. If that does not happen DW in his position as the CEO will have no option other than to look at how cost can be cut, which will be a tough task as we are a lean organisation with very few people compared to other international federations. Not sure what other options are available.</p> <p>It was mentioned that all board members need to step up and assist the CEO and obtain external evaluation. It was clear and all agreed we need to move forward swiftly for sustainable funding.</p> <p><i>(Recording ended abruptly without closing remarks)</i></p>	
<b>12.</b>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p><i>(Not covered during this meeting)</i></p>	
<b>13.</b>	<p><b>Date of next meeting:</b></p> <p>Date: Wednesday 21st December 2022</p>	



	Time: 2.00pm London GMT	
	Location: TBC	