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twif
IS A MEMBER OF



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Ongoing tough conditions and tough decisions

Whilst the global Covid-19 pandemic continue to challenge us in our day-to-day activities and engagements within our work environment, and family and social life, we should also be extremely thankful - grateful even - for all the Blessings.

This, despite the tragic loss of family and friends, and some of us have lost their jobs and livelihood. All of us wish for a return to some normality but we can only achieve this by joining efforts and working together at all levels of our global society.

We have just experienced a very successful 2021 World Outdoor Championships in Getxo. Despite many challenges and the perseverance and efficiency of the organizing committee and the Basque Association - their attention to detail, discipline and adherence to protocols by all stakeholders - and the excellent execution by the TWIF officials working as a well-oiled team, ensured a good outcome for all.

In total 16 countries managed to attend with varying sizes of groups with 8 countries qualifying for participation the 3 weight classes in the Tug of War event of the World



Anton Rabe.

Photo: Eddie van Raamsdonk.

MISSION STATEMENT

As an International Federation our mission is to provide the structure and good governance necessary for the well-being and development of the sport of Tug of War throughout the world.

Our Primary Objective is to attain a sufficiently high level of excellence and universality to expedite our acceptance by the International Olympic Committee as a sport within the programme of the Olympic Games, a status held by our sport in the early years of the 20th century.



GETXO Outdoor Championships
mixed team from Swellendam, South Africa



Games in the USA in July 2022. Of these, 4 countries qualified in all 3 weight classes. We will engage shortly with the countries who have qualified for the World Games to agree numbers of participants and due dates for registration and related requirements. I wish to thank all the organisers, officials and participants for a job well done under extremely difficult circumstances. The continued loyalty, interest and energy from unpaid officials is really heartening and well appreciated. Although we are a non-professional sport without any full-time officials, we certainly have the ability to excel and to perform at an apex level like any sport with much more resources. In a sense: Punching above our weight!

In conclusion, I wish to encourage all stakeholders and their families to vaccinate themselves. The global opposition and militant behavior of anti-vaxxers is very difficult to understand or comprehend as there is *no* scientific proof that vaccines are not working and has an extremely low risk. On the other hand, the benefits are extremely high with reduced transmission and a lower probability of further mutations. If we vaccinate in numbers, we *will* globally be able to return to some normality, including international travel and big sporting events.

Please empower yourselves with facts and don't listen to unsubstantiated allegations from uninformed people. Until next time, please take care and stay healthy.

Regards

ANTON RABE



2022 TWIF EVENTS

2 - 6 March World Indoor Championships, Doetinchem, Netherlands (article on page 11)

8 - 9 April TWIF Seminar & Congress in Sursee, Switzerland

30 Apr - 1 May International Tournament Felton Eccles, England

27 - 29 May International Tournament Sins, Switzerland

1 - 2 July African Championships, Swakopmund, Namibia

7 - 17 July World Games, Birmingham, Alabama, USA

15 - 18 Sept World Outdoor Championships, Holten, Netherlands



SOKATIRA MUNDIALA

The organization of Sokatira Mundiala, Basque Country Tug of War World Championships, has been a long journey which fortunately has been able to culminate with the holding of the championships in Getxo.

AMAIA OCERIN

*Communications Manager,
WC Getxo*

If normally the organization of an event of these characteristics requires a great management, logistics and coordination effort for many months, this time COVID-19 completely changed the initial plan and we can say that we have had to invent a new model of championship.

All of the people and institutions that make up the organization team, since we obtained the candidacy for the organization of the world championship, set our objective to help Tug of War on the international level and TWIF as a body to take steps forward in areas like technology, sustainability or the promotion of the sport. Our expectations were very high and we faced the challenge with great determination and excitement.

But in March 2020, with the outbreak of COVID-19, all those plans were thrown out and

hard decisions had to be made. The first, of course was, the suspension of the call for the championship of September 2020. We always saw it as a postponement and not as a definitive suspension.



Above: Bedford Ladies, England won silver in the 500 kg Open
Right: Czech Republic coach Matej Slavik





Above: Golden girls in the 500 kg

Right: Mixed Open World Champions, Allgäu Power Zell Germany

Swedish Mixed 580 kg team, Athlete of the Month September 2021 World Games



For long months we worked to seek alternatives that would allow for the championship to be held with all the guarantees in the sports and competitive aspect, but, of course - and above all - that the necessary conditions would be met so that the athletes could attend with all the guarantees at the health level. For this purpose we developed a complete anti-COVID-19 plan covering all the aspects and issues to be taken into account precisely in order to guarantee the health of the participants.

You already know the result. We had a strict prevention plan at Sokatira Mundiala and we focused on all levels of the championship with all the guarantees at the health level. This led to the measures that we have had to take as regards preventive tests, isolation, distances between people and no contact, limitation of movements, etc.

This plan affected all areas of the organization of an event of this size, and we had to reduce the budgets of many other areas in order to be able to cover the great economic outlay that these measures required.

So we experienced a different championship. We know that the measures taken were often not to your liking - making this not a 'normal' championship. You had your movements limited and you were subjected to certain rules. In general these rules were followed.

We were satisfied to be able to have held Sokatira Mundiala and to have contributed to our sport's being on the move again. We can all be proud



Above: U 23 Men
600 kg, Switzerland
who won Gold
Right: Fam Janssens 720
kg



Officials at
the Getxo
Championships



DID YOU KNOW

That the team of
3 Chiropractors
treated 214 people
during the World
Outdoor Championships
in Getxo?

that we have achieved this and we
have to thank everyone - all the clubs
and institutions involved - all the
people who took part and the TWIF itself for the

work performed during these months and for the opportunity granted to the Basque
Country to organize it. We hope that in a not very distant future Basque Country can
host a competition of these characteristics again in normal circumstances so that we
can continue to contribute to the promotion of this sport.

WE DID IT!





GETXO 2021 5th WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS COMPETITION RESULTS

GETXO 2021 OPEN CLUB COMPETITION RESULTS

	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
500W	Gaztedi (BAS)	Bedford Ladies (ENG)	Sins (SWI)
540W	Jin Mei Shi Da (TPE)	Gelderswoude (NED)	Kaiserberg(GER)
560M	Gaztedi A (BAS)	Sins (SWI)	Gaztedi B(BAS)
580MX	Allgau Power Zell (GER)	Perugia (ITA)	Valleitrekkers (NED)
600MU23	Dietenbach(GER)	Powerrangers (BEL)	Goiherri (BAS)
640M	Heure (NED)	Engelberg(SWI)	Ebersecken (SWI)
680M	Ebersecken (SWI)	Heure (NED)	Stans-Oberdorf (SWI)
720M	Fam. Janssens (BEL)	Valleitrekkers (NED)	Lincoln (ENG)

MEDAL TABLE COUNTRY - OPEN CLUB

NO	COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
1	Basque Contry	2		2
2	Germany	2		1
3	Netherlands	1	3	1
4	Switzerland	1	2	3
5	Belgium	1	1	
6	Chinese Taipei	1		
7	England		1	1
8	Italy		1	



GETXO 2021 OUTDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

WEIGHT	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
500W	Basque Country	Switzerland	Netherlands
540W	Sweden	Switzerland	Netherlands
560M	Basque Country	Switzerland	Germany
580MX	Sweden	Switzerland	England
600MU23	Switzerland	Germany	Basque Country
640M	Switzerland	Netherlands	England
680M	Germany	Netherlands	Switzerland
720M	Switzerland	Germany	Netherlands

MEDAL TABLE - INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

NO	COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
1	Switzerland	3	4	1
2	Basque Country	2		1
3	Sweden	2		
4	Germany	1	2	
5	Netherlands		2	3
6	England			2



Coach Unai Aresti Ugarte - holding the Tage Andersson Trophy - his team the Basque Country Women - won Gold in the 500 kg



ATHLETE OF SEPTEMBER 2021

**In 2022, Mixed
Tug of War will
be a medal
event at
The World
Games for the
first time.**

Sweden and the mixed discipline in Tug of War: that is a special story of its own. The mixed-gender format was invented in Sweden 20 years ago. In 2008, on the initiative of tug of war athletes from Sweden, the team sport with four women and four men literally pulling together received international recognition from the world federation TWIF. Sweden will have more than a good chance of winning a medal. The team won the title at the World Championships in Getxo, Basque Country and thus earned a berth in TWG. Coach Henrik Törnblom's team will pull for gold from 13 to 16 July 2022 in Birmingham, Alabama. His squad beat Switzerland in the final, whilst England and Germany came third and fourth. Gold medals for Sweden were won by Malin Flodin, Maria Arosenius, Simon Andersson, Daniel Eriksson, David Lilja, Johanna Eriksson, Lina Lindqvist Olsson and Jesper Andersson. More than deservedly, this squad from Sweden is The World Games Team of September 2021.

Törnblom describes the uncertainties before the start of the World Championships in Spain in September:

"It was just about a month before the Championships when the Covid restrictions in Sweden allowed athletes to come together for training. Before that, the team members had trained mostly alone, or in very small groups, up to a maximum of four people. When we travelled to Getxo for the World Championships, we had no idea what chance we had of reaching a position among the six countries who would qualify for The World Games 2022."

With a little bit of understatement, the national coach continues: "The competition went well and we are a little bit surprised, and of course very happy with the result. Now we are looking forward to competing at The World Games in Birmingham, Alabama."

BAREFOOT TUG OF WAR: a French specificity

In France, outside the Basque Country where the *Soka Tira* is a real sport of identity as is the *Cesta Punta*, Tug of War is still considered a fairground activity, a fun, family activity. In France, Tug of War is above all a game.

However, the Fédération Nationale du Sport en Milieu Rural (FNSMR) is working to give back its sporting credentials to this discipline which was, let us remember, Olympic between 1900 and 1920! The project is noble and ambitious but the situation is not so simple. *In France, we pull barefoot!*

In the world, the Tug of War has different variants. These variants are managed and institutionalised by the International Federation (TWIF). There is indoor and outdoor Tug of War, both disciplines being practiced with shoes adapted to the pulling surface.

In France, it is the outdoor Tug of War that is practiced. But unlike the official TWIF organisation, in France, people pull barefoot!

Western and Central France, lands of Tug of War

Apart from the Basque Country, Western and Central France are the two main areas for Tug of War in France. In Western France (Brittany, Pays de la Loire), there are about ten clubs and about twenty in Central France (Allier). Not all of them are affiliated to the FNSMR because the dynamics and ambitions are above all local and territorial.

In the Allier, a departmental championship brings together several dozen teams and several hundred pullers. There are 7 pullers in a team, with no weight categories.

In Western France, competitions have disappeared. Only demonstrations linked to traditional Breton games and sports remain.



GUILLAUME
PASQUIER



Tug of War . . . a French story

Tug of War has been practised as part of athletic events in France and Europe since the early 1880s.

It was then included in the Olympic Games from 1900 to 1920, but disappeared from the 1924 Olympic programme due to dissent between the English and the Swedes.

In France, Tug of War was one of the official activities of the French Athletics Federation until the 1950s. At that time, the discipline was particularly present in Brittany, Hauts de France, Normandy and Eastern France.

Following the development of multi-disciplinary events such as the decathlon, Tug of War was gradually abandoned as a sporting discipline.

The practice was revived at the end of the 1960s thanks to a very popular television programme, "Intervilles". However, this revival remained limited to its playful and festive dimension until recent years. Tug of War as a sport hardly exists anymore, except in Brittany and the Basque Country where the discipline (Soka Tira) is eminently linked to the identity of the territory.

In 2016, the Fédération Nationale du Sport en Milieu Rural decided to restore Tug of War to its former glory. It joined the TWIF, participated in international competitions, organised a French championship and supported the creation and development of clubs.

Historically, Tug of War, as a regulated and codified sport, seems to have always been practiced with shoes. Barefoot practice, as developed as it is in some regions, never seems to have been structured as an official sport, especially not within TWIF.

What is the difference between outdoor Tug of War with shoes and barefoot outdoor Tug of War?

The pullers answer us:

The body position is different. You don't go down as far on your feet when pulling barefoot.

The positioning of the feet complicates the

waiting postures, which makes the pulls shorter than with shoes. A barefoot pull rarely lasts more than one or two minutes.

In fact, the positioning of the body leads to a very high rope position, almost under the arm in barefoot pulling when it is located at hip height when pulling with shoes. With barefoot pulling, the arms are very much in demand, whereas pulling with shoes mobilises the thighs above all.

A technique specific to barefoot pulling is the so-called "kidney shot". It consists of a very brief and perfectly coordinated release which has the effect of drawing the opponent backwards and destabilising him. Immediately, the team must then make an equally coordinated and very intense pulling effort by bending the legs to the maximum. This technique may have to be repeated several times in a row to be effective.

A complicated dilemma

The FNSMR wants to develop Tug of War as a real sport. This is the reason for its membership of the TWIF. But the situation is complex. Indeed, if we want to develop tug-of-war in France, barefoot seems to be the best option. On the one hand, it is already common practice and clubs are attached to it. On the





AN OLYMPIC AMBITION

The FNSMR's desire to develop Tug of War in France is also in line with the 2024 Olympics in Paris.

Of course, the return of Tug of War to the Olympics is premature and remains a dream. But we want to take advantage of the event to give visibility to Tug of War and show the world that it is a real sport!



other hand, the need for specific footwear to international stand-

ards may be an obstacle to accessibility. But at the same time, France will only be able to defend its chances at the international level during the competitions organised by TWIF by developing "official" practice, with shoes.

A "barefoot" French championship

For several years now, the FNSMR has been organising the French Tug of War championship. It is an outdoor and barefoot competition and therefore cannot be included in the TWIF calendar.

The strategy of development of Tug of War by the FNSMR is based on two pillars :

1. to multiply the competitions on the national territory by proposing the simplest version of the practice, meaning barefoot;
2. to accompany the most dynamic and motivated clubs towards the practice of high level international, meaning with shoes, by helping them to acquire the material, by organising training courses with neighbouring nations, and by allowing them to take part in the competitions organised by neighbouring nations and by the TWIF.

2022 TWIF Indoor World Championships in Doetinchem Netherlands

MARCH 2022

AUKJE VAN RAAIJ



De Achterhoek is a beautiful area.



Doetinchem is a small city in the eastern part of the Netherlands and has about 44,000 inhabitants. It is located in De Achterhoek, where the official Tug of War in the Netherlands started. The Dutch Tug of War Association was first called *The Achterhoekse Tug of War Association*.

De Achterhoek is a beautiful area, well worth a vacation visit. Doetinchem is a very old city as well. It was first heard of in 838, that time only as a small settlement. Around the year 1100 the city wall was built and in 1236 Doetinchem got its "city rights".

The city centre nowadays has a variety of shops, café's and restaurants. De Oude IJssel river flows through the city. Close to the city centre there is a marina along the river. Doetinchem is very close to Motorway A18, so its easy to reach. The A18 connects with the A12 not far from Doetinchem, all the hotels used for the Championships are located very close to the A12. The city is also easy to reach by bicycle, like everywhere in the Netherlands there are enough bicycle lanes.

Doetinchem can also be reached by train, it has two train stations. However if traveling to one of the hotels it is best to travel to the train stations of Arnhem or Zevenaar.

The Sports Centre SaZa (above) is located in the outskirts of Doetinchem. It is the training location of the national Volleyball teams and is used a lot by the students of "Het Graafschap College", which is next door to SaZa. The first week of March is a official schools holiday, this is why the World Championships will be held then and not in February.

It will be good to be back in Doetinchem where, in 1975 the World Championships Tug of War was held. The organizers hope to welcome many pullers to this event.