



THE INTERNATIONAL FIELD ARCHERY ASSOCIATION

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2011

To the Members of the IFAA
Their Executive and Council members
The IFAA Archers

It has become the norm that I inform the IFAA members and their Archers in December about what has happened over the preceding 12 months. The year 2011 will therefore will not be different.

In 2010 I informed you of my drive to normalise relations with FITA, now called World Archery (WA), and find a way in which the two associations could augment each other. In 2010 the then FITA Executive reached a draft agreement of understanding with the IFAA and this was later ratified by WA Congress and IFAA Council during 2011.

A direct result of this normalisation was that WA would not oppose and in fact did support the initial acceptance of the IFAA by the TAFISA Exec earlier this year, which was followed by a formal acceptance by the TAFISA Congress in November 2011.

This association with TAFISA will allow the IFAA to organise international archery events for all who wish to participate and will allow championships under the patronage of TAFISA and so eventually also open doors that were until now closed for us.

TAFISA patronage will therefore be asked for all international events and their emblem will be shown at all our tournaments. A very short report will be sent after the event, accompanied by a few pictures to TAFISA for publication on their web site.

I have therefor asked for patronage by TAFISA for the World Indoor Archery Mail Match, which will hopefully be given early January. I ask that participating clubs download the WIAMM logo which will be on our website within the next few weeks and display this logo for all to see.

I ask of you also that you send me one or two group pictures of participating archers with the logo clearly visible. The best photos will be published on the TAFISA website.

An application for patronage for the EBHC2012 and the WFAC 2012 will also be sent this month.

In June this year I was invited to address the World Archery Congress to explain our position within the archery fraternity and how I visualise the manner in which both International Associations may work together in the future.

Although the majority of the WA members have applauded that both associations work together, not all their members are in agreement with that and strongly oppose the idea that there may be more than one archery association in a country they represent.

Some of our members have experienced this first hand and have been threatened by their counterpart.

We believe that any sanctions against our archers by such associations are not in line with the mutual agreement of understanding between both parties. The IFAA will challenge such sanctions and discuss these issues with WA when facts become available, as we did on previous occasions.

As part of the normalisation with WA further discussions will be held with representatives of the WA before or during the WBHC2012.

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From these discussions we expect ideas on how the IFAA and WA can get closer in the organisation of Field archery and 3D archery, as well as having similar definitions in shooting styles that are common to both organisations.

These include:

- The Barebow style
- The Longbow style
- The Historical bow style

We will further try and motivate to WA the acceptance of the BU style in their events as a FU style, which is not allowed currently in the unmarked rounds, i.e. 3D

We will also try and come up with rules for Field and 3D ranges that suit both organisations and which allows both organisations to combine tournaments or at least share ranges and so trying to our archers to get closer together.

Already there is talk by some of our member countries to reduce the number of targets per range and/or the number of arrows per butt to find a way to reduce shooting time and increase the social aspects of our events, and we may need to explore such possibilities.

The IFAA also made the first step in the development of archery by training our first IFAA Instructors at the IFAA Archery Academy in Yankton, USA, during October and November. 20 archers were nominated by our member countries and all these archers have committed themselves to the future Archery Development Plan (ADP) under the guidance of our newly appointed Training and Coaching Director: Lynne Fairhall, who resides in Australia.

Early next year the new ADP Committee will be formalised and will start working on a structured development plan for the IFAA. Within the next year the IFAA shall have a Development system going that will not only assure improvement in performance of the individual, but also should assure an increase in attendance of the sport and improve the running of our national and international events.

The IFAA will further extend its influence in "World Archery for All" by introducing an annual archery day under the patronage of TAFISA. This event will also be advertised on the TAFISA website.

Details are being worked out at the moment and will be published as soon as the running of such an event has been finalised.

We have also extended our membership and welcome Bulgaria as our new associate member.

Various other countries have shown interest in joining the IFAA and we await positive feedback from them.

Unfortunately we were also faced by a few potential problems:

Hosting the WFAC 2012 in Tandil, Argentina, will not be possible due to volcanic fall-out after the volcanic eruptions in Chile. The ash clouds can easily be seen on the Web. They cause heavy mist in the region and cause throat irritation and respiratory problems to those who sensitive to these gasses.

The Host (Argentina) has informed the IFAA Exec that a potential alternative venue has been found on the Atlantic coast and we are currently in discussion with the host to obtain certain assurances that the region is suitable and that they are capable of hosting the event in that region.

We will do our best to keep you informed.

The enforcement of the classification card and making this card also a record card to show that you have had experience in at least two tournaments, whatever level, under IFAA tournament rules seems to be controversial in some countries and not clearly understood. We will work on that over the next year.

I still maintain that we are probably the only association in the world that hosts international events for our individual sports persons without them having to have any experience in archery, let alone any of the Field Rounds, be it with faces or 3D.

As an international association we must assure that our competitors at least have shot a bow and know the basic rules of the event they participate in as well as the basic rules of behaviour on the ranges. Safety is our motto and that responsibility lies with the IFAA and not the event organisers or hosts.

Any accident that can be attributed to lack of skill and knowledge will reflect directly onto the IFAA, especially when we know that this is allowed!

In the coming two years the IFAA should prepare for various challenges, especially if we wish to be worthy of our emblem "The World Family of Archers". We need to grow in members and financially.

Our first and main challenge is to expand our membership and the number of archers participating at club and national level. We hope that additional exposure and our future ADP will make this possible and create a foundation on which our growth can be based.

Our counterpart WA realised several years ago that target archery was running a dead-end street and started changing their game to make it more interesting for the younger archers and spectators and thus also their sponsors. Also they changed their name and their logo to become in line with changed views and expectations of today's generation, irrespective of age. I believe that they have been very successful and although some of our archers still think (or hope) that Target Archery will not be maintained as an Olympic Sport, I believe that WA has a stronger position than ever as an Olympic Association.

They were not the only sport: there are many sports that have come up with shorter variations of their main sport to draw spectators and participants.

The IFAA and many of our members are facing the problem of not being able to have permanent venues and the lack of exposure. Having a permanent range or ranges setup is almost impossible for many clubs due to insufficient space and potential vandalising of butts and markers.

I believe that we also must start looking at alternative events at club or even national level, without having to change the IFAA Sanctioned shoots that we are used to.

We must look at an event that requires a smaller area and allows for spectators, an event that could be hosted in a public area such as a football field or some other grass field on a farm, an event that is easy set up by a few people at much reduced costs with at least 2-3 hours of shooting and which is removed easily and quickly.

i.e. We should look at the possibility of introducing the outdoor flint, 3D or Field, of fourteen targets, easy to set up in a small area, not exceeding 130x50 meters, and accessible to spectators.

Similar events may attract new archers, learn the rules easily and guide our archers towards participation in our main field tournaments on full ranges.

We must step out of the spiralling increase of registration fees of our IFAA sanctioned events and future bids should be accompanied by a budget and related registration costs.

No one denies a host the right to make money out of such an event, but that should not come out of the registration fees but out of the catering, local sponsorship and any "side shows". In the last few events I attended in Europe all catering was done by professional caterers and several of them showed a considerable loss in revenue as archers would refuse to pay unreasonable rates for drinks and food and preferred to eat and drink somewhere else.

The bottom line is that a registration cost of 150-200 Euro and excessive high food and drink prices will not favour a bid to host an IFAA sanctioned event, especially during this period of recession.

We need to extend our ADP and keep a formal IFAA Archery Academy going that is IFAA specific, with classes that include all aspects of the sport and management of the sport.

Such Academy should not only be limited to Yankton, but should expand to other centres if and when demand warrants this. The main rule should be that all courses must be the same with similar documents and study material and must be given by qualified instructors.

Lynne and some dedicated instructors will be working on such a scheme from early next year.

Instructors will be certified and will receive special badges to identify them as soon as possible.

Other challenges include:

We need to resolve our old fashioned ideas on "Professionalism".

In my opinion this term should be deleted from our rules. The term is almost "discriminatory" as it only applies to three of our eleven shooting styles, while many archers in the other eight styles cannot be seen as Professionals and in fact these archers no longer comply with the Amateur rules.

What makes these three styles and the Amateur rules actually a complete mockery is that a Professional is allowed to shoot as a Professional in any non-IFAA tournament and receive great financial awards, but still returns to IFAA events as an amateur.

At the next IFAA Council meeting late next year I will submit an extensive proposal to delete the term Professionalism from the By-Laws and bring in a system of award and status that will not so much affect the current classification system, but will give recognition to our top archers in all shooting styles.

But in doing so, we must also educate our archers that it is not embarrassing to be a class B or class C archers and make them understand the reason(s) for such classification and motivate them to declare themselves as shooting in such class, rather than claiming that they have no card or lost their card.

We must get the status of our international events sorted out.

We need to get recognition of international events by the international archery fraternity and the archery industry alike as well as governments (local/regional/national).

I strongly believe that we must start looking outward instead inward for recognition of our tournaments and our tournament winners. We need to get our field archery events included in the sport agenda of individual town councils, regional councils, national councils as well as on the international sports calendar and make our events understandable and not cause confusion and strive at national and even international level by having similar titles to different events by different entities/associations.

I have suggested in my speech to the WA Congress that we could look at a change in name of our world events to "World Field Archery Games" or a name similar.

Such name would be seen as more appropriate as we host an event for those who can attend the event without pre-qualification and irrespective of how good they are.

With such name change it no longer matters how good the score of a winner is. He/she will still be the winner without having to set a minimum score level, which in any case would be contrary to the IFAA spirit and mores.

TAFISA holds the "TAFISA Games" every four years in which the sports associated with this association will host demonstrations and championships. Next year this event will be hosted in Lithuania in June. Although we are now the official representative of archery in such events, the WA counterpart was asked already two years ago to represent archery. Our agreement with WA was reached well after that date, so pressing for our recognition would not suit relation within Lithuania and will cause confusion. Nevertheless I will ask the organisers to recognise the IFAA as the official representative in TAFISA.

The next games will be in 2016 and may be hosted in Friesland, Netherlands. IFAA will be the official archery representative in those games.

Financially:

We need to grow financially and do so independently from the growth in our membership.

We need to use our link with TAFISA to promote archery for all and obtain sponsorship for our tournaments, our instructors' and coaching education, our development programmes, school programmes (possibly in conjunction with other existing organisations), but most of all the IFAA needs to create funds to allow for a manned office, on a temporary basis as a start and permanent later.

This may be a long term vision, but with growth such an office will become necessary. At first we may consider approaching other associations that are run by volunteers to share such office and/or person.

With the introduction of the new IFAA Constitution in 2006 some member associations were adamant (against the advice of the Exec) to include the Auditing Committee as a Standing Committee in our Constitution. This Committee has actually failed hopelessly and currently only exists on paper as the World Council has failed to nominate and elect the two members of this Committee even though our Secretary has asked for nominations on at least two occasions. This failure by the Council to elect these members places the IFAA in jeopardy and may be challenged by its own members as the financial affairs are run unconstitutionally. Also the position of the Treasurer becomes uncertain.

This state of affairs must be corrected as soon as possible and not later than by the next Council meeting!

Rejuvenation of the IFAA management:

I will be taking steps to introduce new presidential committees in the future to try and get new faces into the IFAA management and the development of the sport.

These people will not be experienced in matters of the IFAA, its running and its politics, but they be “trained” and will come up with fresh ideas and fresh programmes that will hopefully allow a refreshed IFAA to work under new leadership.

Such steps may not be acceptable to all members as this may bias future elections, but we must get new and younger people in management positions with the knowhow to run the IFAA as we no longer can afford inexperienced volunteers that may be voted in on the basis of popularity alone.

In the current IFAA Exec and even in the current IFAA Council are people that I recognise from my first meeting in 1992 in South Africa.

Tim Stone and I have been Exec members for 16+ years. Some of the council members, including myself have been in the IFAA Council for 20 years or more.

We may create a degree of stability, but we surely do no longer represent all the aspirations of our new members and archers.

Improve communication with our archers.

Over the years some of the National Councils have stood accused to block, delay or even misrepresent communication that has been sent out by the Exec and/or having made decisions without consultation with their archers and so form a bureaucratic block that should be totally alien to our association.

We are also aware that information is sent to Representatives who are no longer in office and the IFAA was not formally informed.

In some cases the Representative is simply too busy to spread the information and simply forgets.

This causes a degree of strain of the IFAA and the Exec that is unnecessary and we must take the necessary steps to make sure that all who are interested can have access to this information and so with that knowledge approach their national exec in accordance with the rules of that member association.

Although the IFAA is not in a position to dictate to a member how internal matters are run, we need to make sure that archers are informed and make decisions based on knowledge.

I have therefore asked our webmaster Steve Barratt to revamping the IFAA website. This website will have a section where all issues that will affect our archers and the IFAA, the records of decision etc. will be accessible to all our members.

We will start an “open door” policy so that no member archer can claim not to have access to information. Our archers will have direct access to minutes of our World Council Meetings, proposals to amendments to our Constitution and Book of Rules, vote results, etc.

In addition there will be a “Down Loads” page that allows anyone to download IFAA standards like scorecards, equipment inspection cards, information sheets on how to set out ranges and what potential dangers to take under consideration, etc.

We hope to have all this running by the end of January 2012.

Last but not least:

We need to get stricter on accepting new members and place some conditions on them, similar conditions that will have to be set on our current members.

Future members will have to commit themselves to host at least one national outdoor tournament (Field/Hunter/Animal or 3D) under IFAA tournament rules that will last at least two days.

If such requirement is not met, the associated membership will be extended. In other words, they cannot become full members at the IFAA Council meeting following their application.

Current members who do not host such annual event(s) will be motivated to include such national event(s) in their annual archery calendar or may face the possibility to become associated members without a vote.

Why should have such a member the right to vote on a sport in which they are not actively involved, even though their archers are? Why should an archer have to compete in tournaments outside their country to obtain classification or knowledge of our tournaments and tournament rules? That simply makes no sense.

We need to look at our members that in fact are little more than an “virtual association” with or without facilities but show no intent the expand to become a true national association, even with a small membership, with an AGM and members voting. It may not be a shop or association in name where member archers have no input in what is to happen at national level.

All in all I believe we are prodding in the right direction. I use this term “prodding” as progress is slow and sometimes frustrating, especially for those who are new to the administration. Proposals at the next IFAA Council meeting will be undoubtedly dramatic, but we must assure that if or when the IFAA Council will accept these 2012 proposals, it will be done of the basis of knowledge and we must make sure that all members will be following in the steps we will be taking and not loose members on the way.

I will be attending the Meeting of European members in Scotland in March next year and will ask that some time is set aside to discuss and explain various issues mentioned in this report. Europe represents almost 60% of our members and 70% of our active members. This meeting this year is important to prepare the members for what is to come in October and I will try my utmost to have my proposals formulated to the letter.

Let me close with a point on which I would you like to ponder:

Over the years the IFAA has accepted member countries with a strong following in bow styles that are traditional to that country. They have joined the IFAA because there are no other world association that is willing to cater for that bow style.

IFAA and WA have an understanding to try and avoid further splintering of the archery fraternity at international level by looking into the possibility of accommodating such “traditional style” associations.

The question that I raise is: Could the IFAA cater for such associations under the “Historical Bow” style and let a member like Mongolia or Korea, or Hungary allow for their traditional tournaments under their own rules, sanctioned by the IFAA, without changing the Historical Bow rules for IFAA sanctioned events?

Would the TAFISA Games be suitable for hosting such traditional events?

In accepting these associations would the IFAA fill a gap in the archery fraternity and allow them as a new type of member under the IFAA Constitution?

Hope to see you all there.

Kind regards,



Loet Smit
President of the IFAA

Note: The contents of this letter present my observations and viewpoints only. They may not represent the viewpoints of the combined IFAA Executive or the membership; neither do they present current or future policies of the IFAA until approved by IFAA Council.