



World up
Keep
Climbing

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF SPORT CLIMBING
www.ifsc-climbing.org

14 April 2020

Teleconference: Message from the IFSC President to all IFSC National Federations

Dear Presidents, Dear Federation Leaders, Dear Friends,

Welcome to this meeting via teleconference and thank you for being with us. A warm welcome to those who made a big effort to attend, waking up very early in the morning, or remaining awake so late in the evening: thank you!

Today I will ask you a bit more patience than last time, because I want to share with you as much information as I can.

Not much has changed in our lives for us here in Torino, Italy, since we met last time on March 24. We are experiencing a very, very long isolation period: it is now one month and six days that we have to remain at home and social distancing is a fact. It is and has been hard, especially in the last couple of days. Being Easter time, many of us were used to family gathering, outing and...barbecues.

This year, nothing at all.

However, many things have happened since the last time we talked together.

The postponement of the Games of the XXXII Olympiad, Tokyo 2020

When we met, we already knew that, like our events and our activities, the Olympic Games were at risk and that likely they would have been postponed.

The following weekend, March 28 and 29, was hectic. Discussions occurred from one side to the other of the globe, involving, among others, the International Federations. Finally, on March 30, the International Olympic Committee, together with the Japanese Government, Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government announced the dates of the Games of the XXXII Olympiad, which will take place in Tokyo, from July 23 to August 8, 2021, still under the name "Tokyo 2020".

All the 33 Summer Olympic Federations unanimously approved the decision, during a call with the IOC President on the same day. During the same call, I asked to move quickly to protect the athletes and to confirm that those athletes already qualified remained qualified. This was confirmed a couple of days later, when also the new Tokyo 2020 Qualification Principles were released by the IOC. These updated principles are available on the IOC website and on our website.

The Wall in Tokyo – waiting for the Games

As a side information about Tokyo 2020, now in 2021, I want to respond to those who asked what would become of the wall during the months to come.

You probably remember that the construction of the Olympic walls, offered by our partner Entre-Prises, was completed a few days after the protection shell in mid-February, in the Aomi parking lot. I wish you could see the pictures of that amazing infrastructure. On the Olympic wall, we ran a nice and successful Test Event in early March, despite the limitations in place.

However, panels, holds and volumes were not supposed to stay mounted and exposed to elements for so long. Therefore, they need to be stored in a protected place. Unfortunately, the panel dismantlement requires the support of Entre-Prises technicians, but, because of travel restrictions, they cannot fly to Tokyo...

Everything is so complicated in these days.



World up
Keep
Climbing

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF SPORT CLIMBING
www.ifsc-climbing.org

Tokyo 2020 Qualification System principles and process

Now, let us go through our Qualification System and have a look at our situation.

We are on April 14, 2020, and, at this stage, we have 15 female athletes and 15 male athletes qualified.

Following the criteria of our Qualification System, with the limitation of two athletes per country, we used the 2019 results: the IFSC Combined World Championships in Hachioji in August and the IFSC Combined Qualifier in Toulouse in November.

We reallocated the Host Country Quota, because Japan with four athletes (Akiyo Noguchi, Miho Nonaka, Tomoa Narasaki and Kai Harada), qualified in the Combined World Championships in 2019 and confirmed by the Japanese Olympic Committee, already fulfilled the country quota. Because of that, Japan could not use that quota anymore.

The two “fifteenth” athletes to qualify come from the Pan-American Combined Championships, held in Los Angeles in early March of this year, 2020. That was the last event we have been able to play, an event that for this and other reasons remains strong in our memories.

In accordance with our Qualification System, at the end of April we will reallocate one more slot per gender. This slot was reserved to the Tripartite Commission. The International Olympic Committee informed us that they did not receive any application complying with the criteria and the terms provided by the relevant regulations to allocate the Tripartite quotas. Therefore, we have now an unused quota place that we will reallocate – following the QS rules – at the end of April.

At the end of April, we will have 16 + 16 athletes qualified: this means that we will have four fifths of the field qualified.

Four + four slots will remain open: one (female athlete) plus one (male athlete) for Africa, one plus one for Europe, one plus one for Oceania and one plus one for Asia. All these slots will be allocated through the relevant Combined Continental Championships.

You all know that all those four Combined Championships were scheduled at the end of March 2020, but, because of the pandemic, they have been postponed. The intention of the IFSC and its Continental Councils, the relevant National Federations and Organizers, was to reschedule those events in June, but, unfortunately, the situation got worse and made June not an option.

Keeping in mind the IOC statement that although taking place in 2021, the Games of the XXXII Olympiad will maintain the name “Tokyo 2020”, we considered how to guarantee the fairness of our QS. After consultation with the International Olympic Committee, the IFSC Executive Board decided to conclude the qualification process by the end of 2020.

Therefore, those four events – the Combined Continental Championships - shall take place before December 31, 2020. The dates for the Combined Continental Championships are to be confirmed by the Continental Councils by May 15.

Good luck to the organizers and good luck to the Athletes.

The Olympic Future: Dakar 2022 and Paris 2024

Still in this section related to the Olympic Games, I want to say a few words on Dakar 2022 Youth Olympic Games and Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Sport Climbing will present bouldering in Senegal and we are working with the IOC Sport Department to finalize the participation conditions.

Moving to 2024, some of you asked me recently what is going to happen with our confirmation for Paris 2024, expected by the end of the year 2020, precisely at the IOC Executive Board meeting in December. Although we did not get any precise information in this regard, I think the issue will be on the IOC table after summer.



World up
Keep
Climbing

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF SPORT CLIMBING
www.ifsc-climbing.org

Paris 2024 Organizing Committee needs to know what we want to know too, and they are pushing for a decision. For the time being, we continue to work with our friends in Paris, and the project of Place de la Concorde Urban Arena, approved by the IOC Executive Board on March 4, sees Sport Climbing in it.

The IFSC season, the 2020 calendar

We have talked about event postponement, so now we can jump into the 2020 calendar.

As a preliminary remark, I confirm what I said last time: with a very few exceptions, all National Federations and Organizers expressed their will to run their events, and, when necessary, to postpone them later in the year. The IFSC Executive Board recognizes the efforts of those National Federations and Organizers to react, not to give up and to fight.

After the analysis of all factors, the IFSC decided to set an eight-week window before announcing the restart of the season. Eight weeks are considered a reasonable period for:

- the athletes to train (at the moment because of the restrictions in force in many countries gyms are closed and people cannot leave their homes);
- the organizers to prepare their events properly;
- the National Federations to make travel arrangements;
- the IFSC to plan properly and implement effectively all preparation steps;
- the travel restrictions to be uplifted.

The decision on the restart of the season will be taken on the 1st day of each month. For example: on the 1st of May, we will know whether our competitions will start again in July or not. On the 1st of June, we will decide about August...and so on.

The question we often hear is: Will we be able to start the season? Will we have a season? This is a legitimate question...I do not know the answer, because, at this stage, there is no answer.

What I know is that I have to thank the IFSC amazing staff, who is working so hard trying to find solutions to a situation that is not getting better: thanks Piero, Anne, Francesca, Jérôme, Silvia, Alessandro, Erica, Federico Hazel, Marco, Simona and Tamaris. Some of them are here with us today. They and all the others work from remote, as the law requires in these days, with an incredible team spirit and an unbeatable passion.

Moreover, I cannot forget my colleagues in the Executive Board. From the beginning of the crisis, we are meeting every Thursday, every week. These frequent meetings are important to monitor closely the situation, but also to encourage each other. For some of them it is quite hard because they have to wake up very early in the morning, or stay awoken until very late in the evening, because of the time difference. Their contribution though is constant and essential in these hard times: thank you Debbie, Maria, Kobinata-san, Mr. Li, Pierre-Henri, Anthony, Romain, Wolfgang, Shauna and Sean.

There is no answer? Probably not, but there is an attitude and a lifestyle...our way to be...

The IFSC Budget

We have to go through some other potential big issues. The Executive Board and the staff are constantly monitoring the IFSC financial situation. Recently, we went through different possible scenarios and budgets for 2020. We are also working in several directions, in order to reduce the impact of this crisis on the IFSC.

In particular, since most of the staff is registered with the Italian social security, we are going through the process of applying for special government funds to furlough employees.

Moreover, being the IFSC a Swiss Organization registered in Switzerland, we are eligible for a bank loan at 0% interest, in case of need.



World up
Keep
Climbing

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF SPORT CLIMBING
www.ifsc-climbing.org

The dark side of the story is represented by our current status inside the Olympic Family. While other Olympic IFs might ask for an anticipation of the Olympic money (read TV rights), we cannot, because we are not supposed to get any.

However, other forms of possible help are under negotiation with both the IOC and the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations – ASOIF.

For the time being, we have to count on ourselves.

We have our partners. So far, we feel their support and we are confident they will remain loyal.

With the postponement of the Olympic Games, the IFSC situation might become not sustainable for so many months.

In other words, we have created a structure to manage the new scenario of being an Olympic sport with the duty to organize the sport climbing event at the Olympic Games. At the same time, we have to guarantee all our activities.

We are making some painful cuts, in non-essential services, but the IFSC structure cannot be dismantled, nor put on hold for one year, but needs to be financed.

With the risk of a season with a reduced number of events, or no season at all, we must be careful.

For sure the two appeals lodged by the same National Federation to the CAS in Lausanne did and do not help: so far, we have spent already around 93000 €, partly in legal fees and partly in advanced costs to the Court itself.

We are also aware that most of our challenges are also our National Federations' challenges.

We know that on the national scene you are struggling to protect yourselves and your associations. For some it is a matter of survival.

The priority now is to ensure the financial survival of the IFSC.

As soon as this goal is achieved and secured, we want to work on solidarity projects.

Together we are stronger.

Sport Climbing perspectives

There are other aspects of the sport that need to be urgently addressed.

One day, restrictions will become lighter, but we cannot think that we will return to normality as if nothing had happened. At least until a cure is found and/or vaccination is available.

There will be some limitations to our activity, not only competitions, but also (more) in the climbing gyms and likely, on rock.

I am not talking about social distancing only. A hot issue is - for example – the holds that we use with our hands, one climber after the other. Liquid chalk will help for sure, as it is comparable to a hand sanitizer, due to its alcohol percentage. We are working on measures and recommendations with the IFSC Medical Commission: we hope to have soon guidelines available in order to be ready when the time comes.

We are also aware that some Federations and other stakeholders are dealing with the problem; I really wish that nobody were going on his / her own.

I wish we would have collective responses to collective issues.

From our side, after the next Executive Board meeting, we will launch a task force to tackle all these issues and to coordinate efforts.

IFSC Plenary Assemblies: 2020 and 2021 and meetings

Some National Federations asked whether the Plenary Assembly in Cyprus, now scheduled on November 13 and 14, is confirmed.



World up
Keep
Climbing

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF SPORT CLIMBING
www.ifsc-climbing.org

Well, I think that it is quite evident for everybody that we are living in the uncertainty. We can say that we really hope to meet together in those dates. The IFSC Executive Board will soon set a deadline, after consultation with the Cyprus Mountaineering and Climbing Federation.

In the meanwhile, looking at next year, the Board approved the dates for the 2021 Plenary Assembly, that will take place in Paris, France, on April 23 and 24, 2021, thanks to the hospitality of the Fédération Française de la Montagne et de l'Escalade.

This is about physical meetings in long terms.

After several video calls I had with the IOC and all the International Federations, with more than 70 people in attendance, I am convinced that we should use this tool to address important topics, to share information and details. Therefore, we are studying the possibility to schedule regular meetings via video conference with you, National Federations, once every three or four weeks.

Perhaps, doing so, finally we will be able to fill the communication gap between the IFSC, as an institution, and its Member Federations, that we have always suffered.

The idea is to have an interactive discussion with the National Federations, involving the IFSC different departments.

We would like to set a timeline for agendas and questions, to address the various topics properly during the video conference.

We are studying the best possible technical ways to run these meetings.

At the same time, we are exploring the legal boundaries of this tool, in accordance with the Swiss Civil Code, to see how far we can go with our video conferences in terms of decision taking.

(Note: a couple of hours before the meeting, I was informed that four National Federations were suggesting meeting via video call to share information: I was very pleased to hear that and I want to encourage everybody to be active and contribute with ideas and proposals for our life.)

Alive and kicking

IFSC Social Media focuses on social media activation during these hard times. We want to have a place where anyone can feel at home: the climbing community.

The main goals are:

- continue to increase the audience of followers and their engagement;
- focus on positive messages; and
- promote the IFSC coming season.

This Content calendar is what we are trying to achieve:

- Monday: Motivation
- Tuesday: Trivia questions
- Wednesday: Workouts
- Thursday: Throwbacks
- Friday: Fans

We need the support of each Member Federation to create/share content and engage the athletes.

Help us to show to the world that we are alive, that we are a community, and that we support each other. There so many different ways...

Above all, let us show to the world that we never give up.



World up
Keep
Climbing

IFSC Strategic Plan

In the past months, we have gone through the process to elaborate the IFSC Strategic Plan for the years to come. In the plans, we wanted to spend one full day drawing together the lines that would have guided us in the next years. Unfortunately, circumstances did not allow us to do so.

Moreover, general conditions have drastically changed and the future is full of uncertainty.

While principles and our pillars remain the same, the way we will move under them might see a revision.

We will have the possibility to go through some areas of the Plan in occasion of one or more of our next video conferences.

Doing so, we will be able to review what was done so far and have an updated project in November.

What we can do now, is finally to circulate the IFSC Annual Report 2019. This has been sent to all of you today.

The results achieved by the athletes, the IFSC and all of you in 2019 offer the solid ground, on which we can look at the future with optimism and full of hope.

That hope that is guiding us to resist in front of the difficulties of today, and that will guide us in the reconstruction after the recovery.

Conclusion

I said before we do not have the answer to the question ... when?

We must be honest with ourselves. We cannot announce or refer to any timeline...

I cannot say today when we are going to climb the world again.

What I can say is that in these hard times we have seen that without solidarity, our globalization is more a threat than a strength. Because we have learnt that I protect me to protect you and all the people around me and you. You protect yourself to protect me and all the people around you and me. If we protect each other, we shall overcome all this.

These hard days though are helping us to realize what perhaps some had not realized yet: we all belong to the same world. In our diversity, we must be united.

I do not like those who say and repeat that there is no certainty about the future: we are humans, we should know it.

Every night we are literally bombed by dramatic figures getting bigger every day. Figures of thousands of people dying and suffering.

Do we really need to hear that?

Recently from Tokyo someone claimed: "The Olympic Games are at risk even in 2021!" I have to say: "Thank you for the information!"

Sorry, we are a sport Federation. And sport is a laboratory of dreams.

Giving the best of us can make those dreams real.

Let's use these hard times as an opportunity. Let's improve exchanges among us, let's recognize our weaknesses and turn them into strengths.

We have under our hands the first holds of a new climb. Like our athletes during observation, let's share beta and inspiration.

We will climb the world again.

Stay safe. Stay home.

And keep the hope!

Marco