



International Sport Federation (IF) recognized by the International Olympic Committee

Jan Kamras  
President

**WBF NBO Officers' Seminar  
Bangkok – Thailand  
16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2024**

**President's Report**

Dear friends

The following report covers my main activities since the EC meetings in Marrakech August 2023.

**Meetings and visits**

On September 9 I participated via Zoom in an IMSA meeting held in Jeddah/KSA. New statutes and a more structured organisational plan were adopted. Work on a new and improved website were initiated.

October 3-8, I attended the IOC Asian Games in Hangzhou/China, invited by the Organising Committee (as were all presidents of International Federations recognized by the IOC). They paid for flights, accommodation, and a designated assistant and driver! I timed my visit to coincide with the semi-finals and finals of the Bridge competition. It was held in the Mind Sports building where also the chess competition was held. It is a huge high-rise dedicated to only mind sports. The bridge competition was held with optimal playing conditions and technical support. I discovered a neat feature with the screens showing the remaining playing time – it continuously displayed the board number players should ideally have completed in order to finish on time. Something for us to adopt. The finals were broadcast with live commentary on TV, and I had the pleasure of acting as a co-commentator in one session.

The bridge participation was large. Some Asian NBOs to some extent prioritize the Asian Games over the WBF championships if they have to choose. They get more government support for the Asian Games.

The bridge prize giving ceremony was impressive, choreographed to the smallest detail. I was asked to award some of the medals and, while awaiting my turn, I had to stand on a specific, marked, spot on the floor! All teams on the podium were smartly dressed in their uniforms.

During my stay I also visited the largest bridge school in town and had the pleasure of playing a few exhibition hands with the pupils.



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I was invited to attend a large promotion event hosted by the Japanese Olympic Committee for the 2026 Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya. I connected with some of the

responsible persons on their LOC as well as the President of the Japanese Olympic Committee, lobbying for bridge to be included as one of the optional sports selected by the LOC. Unfortunately the chances look rather slim – bridge is much smaller in Japan than in China, and there are many more “local” sports they prefer to showcase.

I also attended the Closing Ceremony of the Asian Games, a spectacle as impressive as at any Olympic Games.

October 9-12, I took the opportunity of being “in the neighbourhood” to visit Tokyo. In addition to discussing the usual matters of common interest I wanted to explore if more could be done locally to get bridge into the Asian Games in 2026.

The JCBF hosted a meeting on October 10 at the official residence of Hiroyuki Hosoda, the speaker of the Japanese National Diet and as such the second highest ranking official of the Japanese government, who was at the time also the Chairman of the JCBF! I had hoped that he could be of great help with the LOC of the Asian Games. Unfortunately he was very ill at the time and tragically passed away shortly thereafter. The board will continue to lobby the LOC, but it does not look promising.

On October 12 I was interviewed by the Nikkei Shimbun, one of the largest newspapers in the country, at the Yotsuya Bridge Center. I also had the pleasure of playing in their regular tournament afterwards with a JCBF board member, placing second behind the pair that wins most of their events.

On October 22, I attended the introductory (Zoom) meeting of the newly formed Marketing & Communications Committee under the chairmanship of Ben Thompson.

November 13-16, I spent time in our Lausanne office as well as attending the ARISF General Assembly and the IF Forum (a seminar for officers of the IOC recognized International Federations) together with our General Secretary, Arianna. Attending IF presidents were invited in groups of five to a half-hour meeting with IOC President Thomas Bach. He started off by addressing me “out of the blue”, saying that he met recently with his friend ex-Argentinian president Mauricio Macri, who could not stop talking about bridge!

This of course resulted in bridge getting more than its fair share of those 30 minutes.

On November 14 I also attended a hybrid IMSA meeting.



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On November 17 I attended an MSTeams meeting of a recently formed ad hoc group to discuss bridge development in general. Included in this group are the presidents of the largest NBOs, as well as the Executive Director of the ACBL.

November 30-December 4, I visited the ACBL NABC in Atlanta, for the usual meetings and interactions with players, officials, and other actors in the bridge world.

On December 17, I held a meeting with some EC members on Zoom to “brainstorm” about possible future modifications to our organisational structure in terms of efficiency, costs, and governance in general. To be revisited.

January 10-17, during my usual private visit to the bridge week in St. Moritz I met with the president of the PBU together with Eric Laurant and Igor Chalupec to discuss the WBF Youth Transnationals in Wroclaw 2024.

On January 26, I attended the second meeting of the Bridge Development group that met in November.

February 2-4, I was invited by the EBL President to attend EBL’s NBO Officers Seminar in Dubrovnik/Croatia. Apart from reporting on WBF matters to, and taking questions from, the delegates I used the opportunity to collect ideas for the upcoming WBF Seminar, together with Kari-Anne Opsal. I encourage everyone to look at the documents available on the EBL web page. The main topics discussed the status of international bridge (on- and offline), Recruitment & Development, and Women’s’ bridge.

On February 17, I participated in a meeting on Youth Development.

On March 7, I participated in a Finance Committee meeting, preparing for the financial reports 2023.

On March 9, we held an Executive Council meeting primarily to discuss and decide the matter of Russian and Belarusian players in light of the decisions by the IOC published in December 2023. We had a quorum participating and many who couldn’t had made written submissions. By a very large majority it was decided to basically replicate the IOC by prohibiting participation in national representative events but allowing individuals to participate in transnationals, subject to certain conditions being fulfilled.



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**Ongoing activities**

The Championships and Rules & Regulations committees have continued its intensive work updating all regulations relating to our events.

The Women's committee, through the efforts of Mary Kelly Rogers and RealBridge, has arranged a very successful online championship for women teams from 7 of the 8 WBF Zones.

I apologize for the late submission of this report, caused by my health problems the last few months, and am looking forward to "seeing" you soon.

Best regards



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