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IPC Swimming Summit Submission by Canadian Paralympic Committee and Swimming/Natation Canada

Theme: Competitions

Topic: IPC Swimming Competition Approval Process and Related Areas

Background and History:

Swim meets are what the swimmers and coaches prepare for daily, monthly, annually for a chance to achieve athletic excellence. Swim meets are the showcase where swimmers, coaches, clubs, national federations and international organizations strive to show their best form. They are the lifeblood of the sport, whether it is a development meet at a swim club in Europe, a National Championship in South America or a Paralympic Games, it is where the sport will show all its greatest qualities.

IPC Swimming has ensured that the swim meets across the world have approved competitions at all levels to ensure that the integrity of the IPC Swimming Rules are maintained and applied fairly; that the swimmers compete in a safe environment; that the playing field is fair and equitable based on the IPC Swimming Classification System and that through the training of officials, that competitions take place in the far corners of the globe and the sport of disability swimming will continue to grow.

IPC Swimming supports and hosts major international meets in all the Paralympic Regions of the World as well as World Championships and the Paralympic Games. IPC Swimming also keeps track of World Rankings and keeps up to date World and Regional Records. IPC Swimming has allowed the member countries to host disability competitions through a very simple competition approval process that ensured that all countries could host meets.

The Sport Technical Committee (STC) was the driving force behind the sport and ensured the integrity of all parts of the swimming competition continuum and provided technical expertise in terms of competition structure, classification and technical rules. A Sport Manager was added to assist the STC and the system was very functional. The disbanding of the STC left a huge void and resulted in capacity issues at the IPC Swimming office. It is clear that while the Sports Manager has done an excellent job, the organization and in particular the swimming competitions aspects of the organization are hurting without the technical direction of the STC. As a result, many competition related functions currently in place must be reviewed, revised and reworked for the organization to continue to grow in the field of competitions.

Considerations:

IPC Swimming must review and re-establish the Sport Technical Committee to act as the technical voice related to all aspects of competitions. This technical voice would be able to guide IPC Swimming to address the following considerations:

- IPC Swimming's main focus needs to be on the major competitions and ensuring that these flagship events are spectaculars and not just another swim meet. These meets include:
 - Paralympics; World Championships (SC & LC); Regional Championships including Europeans, Pan Ams, etc.

- IPC Swimming needs to establish a long term calendar (1-2 quadrennials) with quadrennial majors (IPC Sanctioned); annual international invitationals (IPC approved).
- Differentiation between an IPC Sanctioned Competition and IPC Approved Competition
- Differentiation between an IPC Sanctioned Competition Procedures and Rules and IPC Approved Competition Procedures and Rules
- IPC Swimming should take a look at the “Demonstration Events” at Olympics; World Championships and Commonwealth Games and whether these events are promoting the Paralympic Ideals and Movement.
- IPC Swimming needs to establish a Universal Point Scoring system (similar to the FINA Points) for use in multi-disability events in all regions of the world.
- World Rankings should be kept for all events and all courses.
- World Records should be kept for all events and all courses.
- Review of the current IPC Competition Approval Process and consider revising timelines and requirements to ensure that all countries are able to host meets.
- Consider empowering NPC’s/NSF’s to become the competition approval bodies for meets inside their domestic territory.
- International hosting contracts be reviewed and revised to ensure that potential hosts are not deterred due to the overwhelming demands of the parameters. (i.e. required TV package is a huge expense that may limit potential hosts).
- Hosting of all major meets have the following:
 - Standardized Operations and Procedures to ensure no time crunch
 - Critical timelines need to be established and followed for
 - Event Contracts
 - Meet Packages
 - Qualifying Times/Standards
 - Debriefs
- Meet rules should be in place for the benefit of the competitors and to ensure a fair and level playing field.
- Drug testing for World Records should follow the same format as the FINA procedure.
- Establishment of the Paralympic World Cup in a timeframe where the best in the world will come.

Recommendations:

- Review and revision of Hosting Agreements to promote the hosting of major international events.
- Planning is the key to success and establishing the major international dates with hosts will allow the easier planning of the annual calendar (including the Paralympic World Cup). The establishment of the long term calendar will allow the NPC’s/NSF’s to set their budgets and allow for better racing around the world.
- Differentiation between and IPC Sanctioned Competitions and IPC Approved Competitions
 - **IPC Sanctioned Event** – IPC Sanctioned events are events that are defined as the Major Events (Paralympics; IPC Swimming World

Championships; Regional Championships – Europeans, Oceania, Para Pan Americans; Para Pan Pacific)

- All the current IPC Swimming Sanctioned Competition Rules and Approval processes would apply to these competitions including:
 - 90 or more days prior to competition approval
 - Pool Depth
 - 8-10 Lanes
 - Lane Width
 - Warm down facility
 - Doping Control
- **IPC Approved Events** – IPC Approved events are events that would be defined that events that would be run domestically in any country in the world. A set of IPC Swimming Approved National Competition Rules and Approval Process needs to be developed and applied to ensure competitions are easy to run for any Local Organizing Committee, NSF or NPC in the World.
- **Modification of Current IPC Swimming Competition Approval Process**
 - **Submission deadline** – change from 90 days to 30 - 45 days prior to the event. LOC's rarely have their meet packages prepared 12 weeks prior to the competition, 4-6 weeks is a much more manageable timeline and will ensure that domestic competition results will be entered into the IPC Swimming World Rankings.
 - **IPC Swimming General Competition Rules** for approved competition need to be developed and reflect the current conditions regarding facilities in use around the world including:
 - Current IPC Competition rules would govern the meet.
 - 25 or 50 metres pools
 - 4-10 lane pool – pool meets length and depth requirement; starting block requirements then number of lanes is not a factor.
 - lane width 1.8-2.5 and .2 m between the two outside lane ropes and walls
 - Minimum depth at starting end is 1.35m; from wall to 6m from start and then 1.0 – 6.0m deep the rest of the way.
 - Electronic vs. Manual timing as outlined in Competition Approval Guidelines
 - Integrated Competition vs. Exclusive Para Swimming Competition
 - Integrated events vs. Para Swimming dedicated events
 - Class racing vs. Multi-disability event racing
 - Timed final integrated
 - Integrated Heats; dedicated finals
 - Dedicated Heats; dedicated finals
- **National Competition Approval Process** – FINA focuses on only FINA Sanctioned Meets and empowers their member NSF's to ensure that the FINA Rules and Regulations are enforced at the National Level through a domestic sanctioning process.
 - It is proposed that IPC Swimming would have an authorization process to certify NSF's or NPC's to approve competitions domestically.

- NSF's or NPC's that gain certification would be empowered as the domestic approval body for swimming competitions in their country.
 - NSF's and NPC's would use the IPC Competition Approval Parameters to approve domestic comps and then notify IPC Swimming that the competition was approved and that they should expect results from the competition.
- Those NSF's or NPC's that are not certified would still use the IPC Swimming Competition Approval Process.
- This National Competition Approval Process would reduce the volume of approvals IPC Swimming would have to process.
- **Development of a NSF/NPC Competition Approval Certification** - develop a set of parameters that will outline the requirements that an NSF/NPC needs to have in order to ensure that the capacities needed to ensure all competition approval parameters are met. These may include:
 - National Swim Meet Management Handbook and Meet Management training
 - National Officials training program including Para Swimming modalities
 - IPC Regionally Approved Officials
 - IPC Swimming Officials training program – domestic
 - Dedicated NSF/NPC Staff for Para Swimming to act as the approval body
- IPC Swimming needs to establish a stance on the concept of “demonstration events”. Are they hurting or helping the sport?
- Establishment of a Universal Point Scoring System to be used around the world in multi-disability events. There must be research done here to determine what is the best method for determining the 1000 point mark and once it was established that it would be used by all countries to insure the integrity of multi-disability scoring around the world.
- An IPC Swimming Rule Committee is established to research and propose changes to the current IPC Swimming Rules based on changes to the FINA Rules to ensure that the proposed rule change is feasible in the realm of Paralympic Swimming. Committee would be composed of, but not limited to a Classification Rep; Technical Official Rep and a Coaching Rep.
- If a swimming competition does not have doping control as part of its standard operating procedures and an unofficial IPC Swimming World Record is set at the meet, that meet management has 24 hours to have a drug test performed in a similar manner to the FINA procedure.