

General Assembly Information 2023/2024

The AGM dates were amended to coincide with the Irish National Championships

Agenda 2023/2024

1. **Opening Remarks**
2. **Approval of minutes**
3. **European Games, Krakow 2024**
4. **FIP Veterans European Championships**
5. **Seniors World Padel Championships 2024**
6. **FIP European Padel Championships Qualifiers**
7. **FIP Annual General Assembly**
8. **Padel Europe**
9. **Junior Development Programme**
10. **Padel Forward Initiative**
11. **National Team Development Plan**
12. **Sponsorship Opportunities**
13. **Irish Padel Tour**
14. **The Women in Sport initiative**
15. **Disability Inclusion**
16. **New Clubs**
17. **Social Media**
18. **Any other matters**

Attendees in-person/online:

- Naomi Nicholl
- Joe Cabello
- John Brady
- Alvaro Cabello
- Jack Curran
- Moya Ryan
- Siobhan Murray
- Anna Kurkul
- David Garcia
- Jeremy Coyle
- Eoin Dunne
- Glenda Brady
- Alonso Garcia
- Dickson Butler
- Gonzalo Rodriguez
- Annie O'Reilly
- William O'Brien
- Apologies: Pablo Silva Garabino, Sam McKibbin, Joerg Steegmuller

Date: September 14th 2024 12pm Location: Bushy Park Padel Club, Rathdown Ave., Terenure, Dublin

1. Opening Remarks The report covered an extended period as the decision was made to hold all future AGMs alongside the **All Ireland Padel Championships**.

2. Approval of minutes

Minutes from the 2022 AGM were approved, and the President's report was presented.

3. European Games, Krakow 2023 In early 2023, the Federation was delighted to announce that Ireland would send a male and female pair to compete with Team Ireland at the European Games in Krakow, held from June 21 to July 2, 2023.

- Padel was selected as one of the 28 different disciplines presented during the games organized by the European Olympic Committee (EOC). Ireland was selected as one of the 24 countries participating, earning a quota place for 2 male athletes (1 pair) and 2 female athletes (1 pair).
- The participation and quota were awarded based on the Federation's level of involvement and efforts as a National Federation.
- The inclusion of Padel at the Krakow European Games 2023 marked a milestone for the sport, showcasing it on a larger stage and was an incredible achievement made possible by the International Governing Body of Padel (FIP). Ireland was honoured to be among the countries participating alongside some of the strongest padel nations.

The nomination and selection process for the athletes were conducted in accordance with Team Ireland's principles and finalized by the Padel Federation of Ireland and the Irish Olympic Committee. The nomination policy was available on the OFI website, and participation was open to all players from clubs across Ireland. Clubs were informed to circulate this information to their players. The Selection Committee was established, and Open Trials were held over several months.

- The Federation expressed its honour at being embraced by the Olympic Federation of Ireland (OFI) as they joined Team Ireland to compete against the best. Sincere thanks were extended to the OFI for their guidance and support.
- Congratulations were given to the players who represented Team Ireland and did the Federation proud. Acknowledgments were also made to those players who put themselves forward but were not selected, appreciating their efforts and support for their fellow competitors. It was noted that for many, this opportunity served as a catalyst for embarking on a journey in competitive padel.
- This was the first time Padel featured in an event organized by Olympic Committees and marked a historic collaboration between Padel in Ireland, the PFI, and the Olympic Federation and Team Ireland. While Spain was the overall winner, the European Games served as a catalyst for growth for Ireland and other smaller countries, significantly increasing the sport's visibility within the sporting community and to the public. The athletes were featured in numerous news articles leading up to and during the Games.

4. FIP Veterans European Championships Another significant milestone for 2023 was the FIP Veterans European Championships held in La Nucia, Spain. Building on the success of the Open Trials, the Federation welcomed many new players to Ireland's National Padel Team. Following the PFI's hosting of the European Qualifiers for the World Veterans Padel Championships in 2022, the team secured automatic entry into the main draw in La Nucia. The national team, proudly sponsored by CUPRA and comprising over 30 players guided by three coaches, demonstrated unwavering dedication and commitment to the sport.

5. Seniors World Padel Championships 2024 The team proceeded to the Seniors World Padel Championships 2024. The Federation expressed gratitude to all clubs, coaches, and players for their hard work and dedication to the veterans.

- For this event, a team of 38 players and 3 coaches was sent to compete against the best in the world, marking the first time in history that Ireland qualified to go straight to the main draw of the World Padel Championships. Participants represented clubs from all over the island of Ireland. The experience provided valuable lessons that would inform future competitions and preparations.

6. FIP European Padel Championships Qualifiers Following the World Padel Championships, a team was sent to the FIP European Padel Championships Qualifiers in Oslo, with hopes to compete in the European Championships in Sardinia, Italy, from July 22 to July 28. Selections were open to players from all clubs, the women's team was two players short after selections, and therefore, the female team did not represent at this time. All clubs, coaches, and players were thanked for their hard work and dedication to sending and supporting the teams. While the team did not qualify for the qualifiers, it was hoped that players and coaches left with amazing memories and valuable lessons for their future padel journeys.

7. FIP Annual General Assembly

The 33rd edition of the Annual General Assembly for the International Padel Federation was held in Asuncion, Paraguay. The Assembly ratified the entry of ten new federations into the FIP, bringing the total number of affiliated federations to 81. Luigi Carraro also released the official World Padel Report WORLD PADEL REPORT President Carraro presented the first World Padel Report, related to FIP activities and produced by the FIP Research & Data Analysis Department, the Federation's research team. A comprehensive effort, a true wide-angle snapshot of padel worldwide, particularly appreciated by the delegates in the assembly. The study shows that, compared to the last assembly (Rome, July 2023), over 220 FIP tournaments have been held worldwide, with another 200 scheduled to take place by the end of 2024. Over 2,000 players, from 60 countries, have participated in FIP tournaments since the beginning of 2024. We will contact all clubs again regarding their numbers for updates for the FIP R&D.

Of note, our own programmes in Development were mentioned in the Assembly by the President Luigi Carraro, and Mr Carraro thanked our Federation for the work we are doing in progressing padel as a younger padel country

8. Padel Europe

In Sardinia , during the FIP European Padel Championships and in the presence of the president of the International Padel Federation, Luigi Carraro, representatives of the federations of 31 countries - Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Vatican City, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Principality of Monaco, Poland, United Kingdom, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, Hungary - who have decided to proceed with the establishment of 'Padel Europe,' a new continental entity within FIP that will be based in Spain and was created with a view to strengthening our sport on a continental and world level. The Bye-laws, were established and will override any other continental entity, and as a Federation we were to approve.

FIP President Luigi Carraro commented on the birth of 'Padel Europe' as follows, "I am very happy and I thank the European member countries of FIP for joining this initiative. 'Padel Europe' was born in the name of the same harmony, unanimous key decisions and common intents that

the last FIP general assembly in Asunción, Paraguay, has featured. And not only that: the goals achieved, the increasingly evident expansion of our sport in the name of a common horizon show how each new initiative undertaken by the International Padel Federation is the fruit of complete sharing and mutual trust".

The President from Spain was nominated President of the new continental entity, and it was announced that Naomi Nicholl was nominated Second Vice -President for the new Padel Europe. It was discussed that this could present a great benefit for Ireland, because it will ensure that it will help in advocating for the newer padel countries and establishing key initiatives to encourage growth. The Bye-laws of Padel Europe were approved at the AGM.

9. Junior Development Programme In 2023, the Federation began working on sponsorship opportunities and was delighted to welcome Rockwell Financial Management as a new sponsor for 2024, which led to the launch of the National Junior Programme.

Over the past year, we have worked on our partnership with **ROCKWELL Financial Management** who have come on board as the official sponsor for our new Junior Development programme. In conjunction with FIP, the World Governing Body of Padel, and our new sponsor, we have launched the **National Junior Development Programme**, a fully subsidised and certified course open to selected affiliated clubs and coaches working with juniors in Ireland.

The pilot programme, **developed by the Padel Federation of Ireland, PadelCV and the FIP Development Team**, and introduced by President Luigi Carraro at the recent **FIP General Assembly** in Paraguay, is specifically designed for a newer padel country to commence building junior player participation through a uniformed pathway.

We are now in the third phase of the programme, with our coaches getting ready to launch in schools and clubs. We will be in touch with all coaches and clubs who are involved in the programme.

We held a **subsidised junior training programmes** for participating clubs around Ireland. The President of the Valencian Federation, Alfonso Monferrer was nominated to work with us by the FIP Development Team sent two coaches over to us here in Ireland to commence the programme. This was held over a weekend and we had a huge participation from coaches and clubs from around Ireland who want to be part of the development of Juniors. The training programmes will

continue to be mentored by the team from Spain who will provide ongoing training over the course of the programme running in the selected clubs. Some of our coaches are currently with the team in Spain.

Junior Invitation As part of this programme, we are also inviting interested junior padel players to attend a one day workshop with the team hosting the National Junior Development programme. We would advise all clubs to inform their juniors of this opportunity as it will be an incredible experience with juniors hoping to progress with their padel pathway.

10. Padel Forward Initiative as part of the Erasmus Plus Mobility Sport Programme, the PFI received funding to carry out a programme aimed at enhancing the development of padel in Ireland. In conjunction with the Spanish Padel Federation (FEP) we recruited for paid short-term internship positions for PFI coaches and club staff. The eligible coaching and staff Interns, from clubs around Ireland, travelled to Spain to work alongside top coaches and staff to gain valuable knowledge, and hands-on experience under the guidance of the highly-skilled pioneers of padel of the Spanish Federation including Padel CV.

Anna Karkul, Siobhan Murray, Jack Curran, Glenda Brady and Harry Bingham all spoke at the AGM of their experiences. Anna Karkul made a brief presentation on her month internship. All members who travelled spoke of the benefits of the programme and looked forward to sharing their experiences which will be communicated and shared with all coaches and clubs nationwide.

11. National Team Development Plan – It was discussed that following 2023 and 2024 European and International competition that training regimes were to be developed and designed by coaches along with representatives from each category. Alvaro Cabello stepped down as coach for the Veteran's category, to allow for opportunities for other coaches. It was agreed that for each category, the coaching positions would be advertised. It was also discussed that the coaching expenses for external coaches had exceeded the budget and they were presented, it was agreed that coaches would need to be involved throughout the year with players/teams. It was discussed that clubs were being offered the opportunities to host National Team training in order to provide clubs, other than Bushy Park, with opportunities to host.

12. Sponsorship Opportunities

It was discussed that Naomi Nicholl had secured the Rockwell sponsorship for the National Junior Development Programme and the continued CUPRA Ireland sponsorship, and Naomi disclosed that there were further discussions around new sponsorship opportunities with new clients, however she encouraged all members and clubs to explore this. It was put to all present that sponsorship opportunities were still open for consideration for all areas of the PFI development, including the National team, grassroots and national and international events.

13. Irish Padel Tour

Congratulations were given to the IPT team who have worked on coordinating a successful national ranking circuit for another year in conjunction with our partner CUPRA Ireland. The tour has extended to new locations around the country increasing player participation to 96 pairs at the National Championships in 2024.

14. The Women in Sport initiative also continued with great success, with the last locations being Cavan and Padel 54 in Northern Ireland, where coaches ran a 6-week programme funded by the PFI. It was important to note that previous participants in this initiative went on to represent Ireland at a competitive level, serving as a testament to the success of the programme. The Federation thanked all clubs for their participation and support of this important initiative. Several clubs signed up to host this in the upcoming months, and any clubs interested in running this programme were encouraged to reach out. The Federation aimed to progress this to a tournament for all participating clubs, with several people involved in the planning, which would be discussed later. Glenda Brady from Padel54 volunteered to help to run and coordinate the programme with the PFI. It was agreed that the new Communications team would also help to coordinate the nationwide programme. Jeremy Coyle from Padel Tennis Ireland requested an event at his club in Cork in the near future.

15. Disability Inclusion In 2023 and 2024, the Federation held a number of Padel Certification Courses to facilitate the growing number of clubs and interested coaches. A significant change was made to the national coaching certification, with the decision as a National Governing Body (NGB) to embed Disability Inclusion Training (DIT) into the official course.

This meant that Disability Inclusion Training would no longer be an add-on but would instead be included in the overall training to become a padel coach.

Over 30 coaches and staff participated in the most recent training hosted by the president of Paralympics Ireland, Eimear Breathnach, in conjunction with Active Disability Ireland. The next training session was scheduled for the coming weeks. As per the International Federation, the national federation was recognized as the official body for delivering the padel certification course in Ireland. The Federation extended thanks to the dedicated team that continued to provide this course to all new clubs. The PFI course served as the gateway for ongoing development courses and official pathways, such as the newly mentioned programmes, and was also a critical source of funding for various development initiatives and inclusion programmes run by the PFI throughout the year.

The Federation maintained invaluable partnerships with St. Michaels' House and the Irish Special Schools Sports Council (ISSSSC). The ongoing benefits of the sport of padel were reported by everyone involved, with an increase in student participation in the programmes and workshops. These partnerships were nearing 6 years, and all clubs were encouraged to continue engaging to provide these programmes.

Additionally, the Federation was in the process of building its first-ever Adapted Padel/Wheelchair Padel programme. Collaboration with Active Disability Ireland advanced this initiative, and their support and guidance were greatly appreciated. This movement promised exciting prospects as participation in adapted padel grows globally. The first World Padel Adapted Championships had taken place in 2022, and many opportunities were expected at both grassroots and high-performance levels. The Federation will work directly with the International Federation on this initiative and will provide updates on related progress.

16. New Clubs

It was discussed that there is a huge increase in enquiries to PFI to support new developments, clubs and courts around the country. It was put to all those present that if anyone would like to assist in the role of new club development officer, or to assist, to put themselves forward. Although the growth is greatly welcomed it was acknowledged that it was taking up a considerable amount of time and resources in order to be able to properly cater for the continued growth. It was agreed that volunteer members with a history of building padel courts in Ireland would continue to provide advice only to new clubs and help them with queries throughout the development stages. It was also discussed that legitimate builders and agents who were keen on working with the PFI would make donations to the grassroots initiatives for their inclusion on a database to be circulated to new builds. These builders had to submit all documentation to the PFI and that a representative was to review their builds, without accepting any liability, before placing them on the list. It was also stated that although there would be a dedicated list, the PFI would not be accepting any liability builds, confirming that the courts are as per FIP Regulation builds only. Naomi announced that a new email dedicated to new clubs would be established in order to direct enquires with best practice advice for new clubs etc. New clubs, affiliating to the PFI would still be entitled to a free coaching certification course and to participate/ host in all workshops/initiatives and events, Garda vetting and support throughout the year.

17. Social Media

It was agreed that the social media had experienced peaks and troughs throughout the year and required a dedicated full-time communications and social media team to be employed by the PFI. It was announced that Elena Lopez would be joining the team to work with the PFI and all clubs and coaches and on the upcoming National Junior Programme initiatives.

18. Any other matters

Coaching - the official padel coaching certification was discussed, it was noted that the certification course is an asset of the Padel Federation of Ireland as per our affiliation to the World Governing Body of FIP and that it is important, for the development of padel in Ireland, to maintain the uniformed pathway as per the development team in FIP. We will

continue to provide the official coaching and at the appropriate levels and continue to work with FIP, the Spanish Federation, in particular PadelCV, to upskill our own coaches and provide the pathways for all levels. The funding from the certification courses delivered by PFI has allowed for re-investment into the grassroots strategies. We will continue to invite all new sports clubs and existing sports clubs installing padel courts in their clubs, to attend the certification course and we will continue to offer one complementary place on the coaching to all new clubs.

The **recognition of padel by Sport Ireland** was addressed. Naomi Nicholl had advised that there was ongoing contact with Sport Ireland. Sport Ireland confirmed that the Padel Federation of Ireland is the National Governing Body of padel in Ireland and that Sport Ireland recognition is secondary to this. Not all NGBs have Sport Ireland recognition. Naomi had stressed the importance of achieving Sport Ireland recognition, while maintaining padel's status as an independent sport, as the recognition will help support the work of the federation, the players, the coaches, clubs and all ongoing initiatives from grassroots to high-performance. The PFI, while awaiting NGB recognition, will continue to implement all Sport Ireland policies, follow the Sport Ireland Code of Ethics and all other vital policies in order to ensure that the governance of PFI is as per the Sport Ireland ethos and direction. The PFI will update all documents from the last application and present again to Sport Ireland.

GAISCE

The PFI is a registered Challenge Partner for the President's awards. This opportunity is available to all clubs to provide to the community. Emphasis was put on all clubs having all safeguarding policies in place.

Garda Vetting and Safeguarding

The PFI continues to provide garda vetting for all clubs in Ireland and PFI certified coaches. Due to the increased demand an additional vetting officer, Cristina Ruiz, has been allocated the position and a new dedicated email will be established. The PFI will organise another safeguarding workshop in the new year. All coaches and clubs are directed to Sport Ireland website for an online refresher for those with current safeguarding certification. All clubs advised to follow Sport Ireland and Tusla guidelines on safeguarding.

Charity Partnership

A number of charities have contacted us to partner with us. We have had numerous meetings with Aware Ireland, a mental health support charity, and we will be running a 24 hour padel event to support them. The PFI will continue to support the ISSSC and St Michael's House, and we were delighted to announce that continue to employ Callan Gibney from St Michael's House who has a valued member of the team working for the past three years.

Conclusion of the AGM

Acknowledgements:

- The Chair thanked all members for their active participation, and special thanks were given to those signing in from locations around Spain as they completed the Erasmus Plus Programme.
- 1. **Next Meeting:**
 - The next AGM will be held at the 2025 National Ireland Championships, location to be decided.
- 2. **Closure:**
 - The meeting was adjourned at 14.30 on September 14th 2024