



INTERNATIONAL
RACQUETBALL
FEDERATION



A 2023 Year-End Update from IRF President Aníbal Osvaldo Maggi León January, 2024

Greetings to the Worldwide Racquetball Family. As 2023 comes to a close and an exciting 2024 is beginning, I am pleased to provide this year-end report.

PAST EVENTS REVIEW

The year 2023 showed much activity, thanks to leaders, tournament directors, local organizing committees, and athletes in all areas of the world. A few highlights:

Central America and the Caribbean

Dr. Estuardo Wer and the National Racquetball Association of Guatemala hosted the **XXXIV Pan American Racquetball Championships Guatemala 2023** (April) which was the qualifier event for both the **XIX Pan American Games Santiago 2023** and the **XXXIV Central American Caribbean Games San Salvador 2023**. Junior divisions were also offered at this tournament.

The **CACG in San Salvador** (June) included Racquetball that was competed in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. We thank Centro Caribe Sports and its President, Luis Mejía Oviedo; the Minister of Sports of the Dominican Republic; and all the LOC members involved, including Tony Mesa, Thomas Polanco, Nelson Ramirez, and the staff members who did an amazing job before and during the Games. And of course, special thanks go to the Dominican Racquetball Federation and its President, Rafael Fernandez.

Asia

The 9th **AsiaOpen Racquetball Championships**, April 21-23, was hosted by the Asia Racquetball Federation in Seoul, Korea.

IWGA, **The World Games 2025** -- Thank you to Dr. Cho and Yuni Cobb for attending the 1^o General Management Meeting in Chengdu. The next meeting is scheduled for August. The IRF is working with IWGA to add a Mixed Doubles division to the Racquetball Programme.

We wish to extend very special recognition for the work of Dr. Cho and his colleagues in developing a

specialized Racquetball program in Korea to help and work with athletes who suffer with mental disabilities.

Europe

Restored to full activity after the pandemic, the year 2023 saw many events around Europe: Germany, Ireland, Italy, Switzerland, Netherlands, and Basque Country.

Also, **The European Championships 2023** were held in Hamburg, Germany, in September, presented by the European Racquetball Federation. Congratulations to the Executive Committee of ERF and the National Federations for all the events celebrated during 2023.

Asia, Europe, and the Americas

The first Annual **World Wide Racquetball Day** was September 9th with the goal of showcasing Racquetball as an active sport with a strong community. A number of countries participated in this inaugural event including Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Germany, Guatemala, Ireland, Japan, Korea, and the USA. For instance, in the USA alone, over 25 events were hosted on September 9th. In Bolivia, two events were held and Conrado Moscoso, the #1 player in the world, participated.

Pan Am Sports Countries

Racquetball was prominently on the world stage at the **XIX Pan American Games Santiago2023 in Chile**. Eleven countries competed October 21-27 at the Centro Deportivo de las Raquetas (Racquet Sports Center) near the National Stadium Park.

Thanks to Panam Sports, its president Neven Illic, general secretary Jimena Saldaña, and staff members for their dedicated support of Racquetball in Santiago. Also, congratulations to Santiago 2023, its leaders, staff, and authorities, who worked so hard toward the incredible success of this outstanding event.



Racket:Next, the virtual game sanctioned by the IRF, was on display and available to try out. IOC President Thomas Bach was captured on video wearing the headset and playing the game.

At the **XXXIV IRF World Junior Racquetball Championships** (November 10-18 in Tarija, Bolivia), Junior athletes representing 12 countries competed in 44 divisions. Congratulations to President Javier Olivares, the National Racquetball Federation of Bolivia, and the Tarija Organizing Committee for hosting an outstanding experience for the 304 athletes in attendance.



Draws and results for the above tournaments can be viewed at
www.internationalracquetball.com/past-events-results

FUTURE EVENTS

Confirmed

2025: The World Games, Chengdu, China

2025: Bolivarian Games, Lima, Peru

2026: 25th Central American and Caribbean Games, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

2026: South American Games, Santa Fe, Argentina

Inclusion - Work in Progress

2025: Youth Pan American Games, Asuncion, Paraguay

2026: Asian Games, Nagoya, Japan

2027: Pan American Games, Barranquilla, Colombia

News will come soon announcing the dates and locations of the Pan American Racquetball Championships; the IRF World Racquetball Championships; and the IRF World Junior Racquetball Championships, all to be competed in 2024.

OLYMPICS INCLUSION EFFORTS

After the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, the next Summer Games will be LA28 (Los Angeles, California, USA).

In April 2022, the IRF and USA Racquetball formally communicated requests to participate in the selection process for inclusion on the LA28 Sports Programme. These letters went to LA28 and the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee, respectively.

In late May 2022, the LA28 CEO sent a letter to all sports describing the process for the identification of sports for potential inclusion. He shared the evaluation criteria that had been developed to guide the process. The next step would be to use the criteria to aid in the selection of sports that would participate in a Request for Information phase. A number of sports would then be invited to continue on in the selection process toward a final programme decision in mid-2023.

Racquetball leadership began amassing information in hopeful anticipation of an opportunity to demonstrate the sport's fit with the Programme Evaluation Criteria. However, a letter from the LA28 CEO was sent to the Presidents and Secretaries General of a number of sports including Racquetball on June 30, 2022, stating the following:

The LA28 Organizing Committee continues to evaluate sports for potential inclusion for the LA28 Olympic Games. After a comprehensive qualifying review guided by the LA28 sports programme criteria, we regret to inform you that your sport has not been selected to participate in the Request for Information (RFI) process. This concludes your sport's consideration for the LA28 sports programme.

This ended the possibilities of keeping Racquetball moving forward for LA28 consideration. I thank those who worked to bring enhanced visibility to our sport before the IOC, the USOPC, and LA28.

Please visit www.internationalracquetball.com to view the April 2022 letters that endeavored to place Racquetball under consideration.

ADDITIONAL RACQUETBALL NEWS

1. To explore Outdoor Racquetball as a future international discipline, Osvaldo Maggi and Dean Schear traveled to Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, in October to visit the 2023 KWM Gutterman 3WB Outdoor World Championships. Outdoor leaders such as Mike Coulter, Hank Marcus, Michelle Key, and Darold Key, plus a number of Outdoor athletes answered questions and provided their insights on how the Outdoor game could enrich and strengthen the international racquetball community.
2. In November, IRF President Osvaldo Maggi was appointed by ARISF* President Raffaele Chiulli and approved by the ARISF General Assembly to serve as Financial Auditor for the organization.
* **Association of IOC Recognised International Sports Federations**www.arisf.sport/nws-109-arisf_2023_general_assembly_the_foundations_for_the_future_of_arisf
3. In 2023, the IRF formed a Policy Commission that produced two policies, one revised and one new, that the IRF Executive Committee has adopted effective January 1, 2024. Visit <https://www.internationalracquetball.com/rules/> to become familiar with the IRF's revised Uniform Policy and the IRF's newly developed Transgender Policy. In the coming year, development of a composite policy modeled after several countries' SafeSport-style training and education programs will be an important initiative.

CONCLUSION

To conclude this report and update, it is my honor to thank so many who have contributed to the success of Racquetball in 2023. Much gratitude goes to these premier Sponsors who support the IRF and thus the sport itself: Gearbox Racquetball, Splathead Sportsgear Co., and the El Pomar Foundation. Visit <https://www.internationalracquetball.com/sponsors/> for more about these generous sponsors.




Congratulations and warm thanks to the International Racquetball Tour (IRT) and the Ladies Professional Racquetball Tour (LPRT) for all of the opportunities they have provided for professional athletes and amateurs alike.



The importance of sport is growing around the world. Country leaders, please continue your efforts to develop Racquetball and to be valued supporters of your National Olympic Committees.

Thank you to the leaders, coaches, instructors, athletes, fans, and volunteers who collectively make up the International Racquetball Family. Your hard work on and off the court is the key to our future.

**On behalf of the IRF Executive Committee and myself,
I wish everyone a healthy, safe, and successful 2024!**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anibal Maggi', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Aníbal Osvaldo Maggi León
President
International Racquetball Federation**