

WORLD DEAF RUGBY EXECUTIVE UPDATE NO. 5

July 2021

I know it has been an abnormally long time since our last “*World Deaf Rugby Executive Update*”, but nothing has been “*normal*” for a long while, and almost every aspect of our personal, work, community and sporting lives has been impacted by *Covid-19*.

In most countries across the world not much has been able to happen on the Deaf rugby front, with the exception of places like Australia and New Zealand where the impact of *Covid-19* has been relatively mild. Many other countries haven’t been so lucky, others such as Fiji that were initially almost *Covid-19* free are now being seriously affected, and most other countries are continuing to face multiple massive *Covid-19* outbreaks, particularly with the new *Delta* variants running rife.

Sadly, all of us are acutely aware of how devastating this pandemic has been and continues to be right across the world.

So, our lives - *and Deaf rugby* - have pretty much been on hold for many, many months, most borders continue to be closed, we can’t travel to other countries and there are even restrictions within countries that prevent us visiting family, friends and sports teams in neighbouring regions.

Everything is uncertain!

So, planning for future *World Deaf Rugby* events has been impossible. Too many things can suddenly and radically change overnight as *Covid-19* outbreaks occur, new *Covid-19* variants emerge, lockdowns are imposed, travel restrictions are intensified and border rules revised. But there is now some hope on the horizon!

Optimism for the Future

Though so much is uncertain, there is one clear certainty. The world can only recover if the *Covid-19* vaccine is available and distributed in every country right across the world. The only way out for all of us is if every single person in every country and continent has the opportunity to get vaccinated.

This will require time, money and determination. It will also require the developed, richer nations of the world to commit to funding and supporting the rollout of vaccines to developing countries. Only then can we all look forward positively and with confidence that what we are working towards can become a reality.

I am optimistic that this will happen. As more and more *Covid-19* vaccines are developed, manufactured and distributed to all corners of the globe our lives will slowly become more “*normal*”, and we will again be able to plan our future *World Deaf Rugby* events with much more confidence and certainty.

Argentina WDR Sevens World Cup

We anticipate that the first post-*Covid-19 World Deaf Rugby* event will still be the *World Deaf Rugby Sevens World Cup* tournament that was awarded to Argentina by the previous *WDR Executive* two years ago to be staged in Cordoba, Argentina in 2021.

However, with *Covid-19* inevitably impacting the original 2021 timing of this event, it is now hoped that it can take place in the second half of 2022 depending upon Government approvals, local *Covid-19* restrictions and travel/border rules in place at the time - *and, of course, how the world-wide Covid-19 situation evolves.*

We have been in regular contact with Argentina over the past six months including *Zoom* meetings, emails and *WhatsApp* discussions. Argentina are well organised and progressed in their planning, and have obtained substantial Government, *Cordoba Rugby* and other resourcing and support for the event.

Argentina have indicated the likelihood of them being able to provide accommodation, breakfasts/lunches and in-country transport for up to twelve (12) participating countries for the duration of the tournament, including a couple of days extra at either end of the competition.

Whilst Argentina had previously received the then necessary Government approvals for staging the tournament, additional/revised approvals are now needed following Argentina's latest *Covid-19* wave that led to further lockdowns and border/travel restrictions. They have submitted their revised plans and are currently waiting on a response from the Government.

We will continue to regularly touch base with Argentina on how their plans are progressing, and will keep *WDR* members updated on developments. Hopefully we will have some good news soon!

National Deaf Rugby Activities

We would love to hear from each of you about what's been happening in your *National Deaf Rugby Unions* and competitions over the past year or two. It would be great if each of you also shared that information with other *WDR* members so that we all get a better understanding of what everyone has been going through and the issues and challenges everyone has faced.

I look forward to you sharing your experiences - *please stay in touch.*

We will be in contact again very soon, hopefully with some positive developments!

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WDR Chair

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WDR Vice-Chair

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