

THE DAILY



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YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT HAPPENED YESTERDAY AT SPORTACCORD IN BIRMINGHAM



Panelists discuss Diplomacy in Action at SportAccord 2024 in Birmingham

SUMMIT COMES TO A CLOSE

SportAccord Managing Director Martin Gibbs and Ian Metcalfe, Chair of the SportAccord 2024 Executive Steering Committee, hailed a hugely successful week during the Official Closing Event of the SportAccord World Sport & Business Summit yesterday afternoon.

Metcalfe features in the final Big Interview of the week in today's edition of **The Daily** (p11) while all of yesterday's Plenary Conference Programme and MediaAccord sessions are also covered, including a look ahead to the highly anticipated coverage of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games (p12).

On the final day of SportAccord 2024, the International World Games Association (IWGA) also confirmed that the formal announcement of the host city for The World Games 2029 will take place following its Annual General Meeting on 1 May 2024. The IWGA Executive Committee met here on Wednesday.

EMBRACING THE POWER OF SPORT

An engaging Plenary Conference Programme discussion about the soft power of sport produced hard evidence of tangible benefits from the delivery of major events at the International Convention Centre yesterday, as the SportAccord World Sport & Business Summit 2024 drew to a close.

Neil Rami, Chief Executive of the West Midlands Growth Company, told the Diplomacy in Action session that the need to strengthen international relations was a key factor in the decision to bring the Commonwealth Games to Birmingham two years ago.

World Netball President Dame Liz Nicholl listed some of the benefits that emerged in South Africa and neighbouring nations as a result of the Netball World Cup 2023 in Cape Town.

Meanwhile, Jason Williams, CEO of the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago, said sport is bringing communities together in his nation and has raised awareness of the importance of legacy.

Rami said: "The UK was on its way out of the EU and the opportunity to build trade, investment and development relations was paramount. We were successful in securing extra resources for a business

and tourism programme.

Last year we attracted more investment than ever from India and that was largely down to the impact of the Games."

Nicholl said that host broadcaster SuperSport inspired audiences at the Netball World Cup by sending an all-women production crew. In addition, the South African government provided sprung wood floors for three neighbouring nations and President Cyril Ramaphosa made a commitment at the closing ceremony to build a netball training centre in Johannesburg.

Rami said: "We need to stop talking about return on investment and start talking about influence."

INSIDE **ROUND-UP**
The main talking points from MediaAccord
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Ian Metcalfe on a golden time for sport in Birmingham and the West Midlands

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SPORT CAN LEAD ANTI-ABUSE ACTION

CONFERENCE ROUND-UP

The campaign to tackle online abuse in sport scored a victory with a headline prosecution in Australia this week, but panellists at the SportAccord World Sport & Business Summit were adamant that more needs to be done.

They called for International Federations to take action against offenders who target their sports and for the tech giants to raise their game.

Suggested solutions included a proposal from Janie Frampton, Vice President of the International Federation of Sports Officials, of docking points for clubs that are found to be failing.

Sarah Gregorius, Director of Global Policy & Strategic Relations, Women's Football, FIFPRO, called for a shake-up at the top of sport.

"Sport reacts to two things – crisis and money," she said.

"The people who govern don't have experience of what it's like to be in the margins.



Sanjay Bhandari and Sarah Gregorius

They don't see it, so it's not a crisis for them."

Former Rugby World Cup referee Wayne Barnes raised the issue in conversation with moderator David Eades during the opening session of yesterday's Plenary Conference Programme.

He said the conviction earlier this week for online abuse against a match official during last year's Rugby World Cup showed that World Rugby is prepared to tackle the issue.

Jonathan Hirshler, CEO of Signify, outlined the work of his organisation in tracking

down culprits, and panellists supported the efforts being made to ensure offenders are called to account.

Sanjay Bhandari, Chair of Kick It Out, called for a united approach within sport to deal with the problems.

He said: "We are a tiny industry in comparison with the problems with which we are dealing. The top five companies in the world are tech companies – they dwarf you and they don't care. But our intangible power is huge and we can use that to rally, campaign and influence user behaviour."

RUGBY BACKS INJURY RESEARCH

World Rugby yesterday became the first International Federation to sign up to the newly established Trusted Research Environment (TRE) for Global Sport initiative by the Podium Analytics charity.

The TRE will accelerate research and scientific developments relating to sports injuries by providing a controlled digital environment for sensitive data to be stored and analysed securely – and the tie-up with World Rugby was announced during yesterday's Plenary Conference Programme.

"TREs provide an opportunity to impose higher standards in how commonly used data sets are stored and curated," Podium Analytics CEO Andy Hunt said. "They have proven to be incredibly successful in other

areas of medical sciences over the past decade.

"This decision by World Rugby complements a whole range of other player welfare initiatives that the sport is currently undertaking.

"This has the opportunity to revolutionise how we work with player data to transform our approach to injury prevention and management."

In a statement, Dr Éanna Falvey, World Rugby's Chief Medical Officer, said: "At World Rugby, it is advantageous to bring all our sports injury and research data into one place – a single solution. We are excited to be part of shaping the future of our sport through this innovation."

SPORT SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID TO 'LEAP INTO TECH'

MEDIAACCORD ROUND-UP

MediaAccord cut through the complications of digital media to deliver a key message to International Federations looking to develop their offer – keep it simple.

Ross Tanner, Senior Vice President EMEA, Magnifi, said IFs should not be afraid to "leap into technology", but should know what their strategy is and where their fans are.

Ellie Roach, Digital and Data Services Lead, InCrowd Sports, said: "Do the basics really well, get your house in order, understand where the holes and gaps are, and have a really clear, global strategy."

Melissa Lawton, Chief Content Officer, SailGP, suggested that IFs should not be afraid to fail if they try something new.

"Failure is good sometimes because you learn a lot," Lawton said. "You can try a lot of things and testing, trying and failing is perfectly OK." British Basketball League (BBL) Head of Marketing Joe Edwards



Melissa Lawton

said: "First-party data is becoming more and more important. With privacy laws and GDPR, first-party data is going to be fundamental to success."

The panellists picked their way through some of the established and emerging digital products and platforms.

According to Edwards, the BBL has taken production in-house and is effectively "a 35-year-old start-up" facing the challenge of aligning sport participation with fandom.

He said: "We are working to bring audiences and teams together so we can all learn from the data."

Sport should look outside its own industry for the inspiration that will shape a digital offer for the future, according to Andy Miah, Chair in Science Communication and Future Media at the University of Salford.

During an engaging MediaAccord session, Miah took his audience on a video-based journey "towards a world of immersive experiences".

Miah's advice to International Federations on working with immersive technologies and artificial intelligence was to "surround yourself with young people who are living it".

He warned: "What's important is that sport can't rest on its laurels. We have a need now to find a way to bring sports to places where they haven't actually been historically.

"When we think about the future of sports, it's critical to look beyond sports and see where the innovation is taking place, and it's essential to understand what young people expect from their interactions, whether it's in the stadia or outside."

SCOTLAND THE PERFECT STAGE FOR EVENTS

Scotland continues to underline its reputation as the perfect stage for major sporting events.

In 2024 and beyond Scotland will host World Athletics Indoor Championships, World Orienteering Championships, The 152nd Open and the AIG Women's Open and UEFA EURO 2028.



EventScotland

©SWpix.com
2023 UCI Cycling World Championships

EDMONTON'S EQUALITY AGENDA

PARTNER FOCUS

SportAccord World Sport & Business Summit 2024 Silver Partner Explore Edmonton has urged the global sports movement to back the equality agenda that is at the heart of its latest high-profile campaign, "This IS The Game".

Explore Edmonton has already found an ally in SportAccord 2024 Media Partner SportsPro with the organisation's "NEW ERA" initiative, and now the search is on to find more supporters to help build a legacy.

"At the core of 'This IS The Game' and 'NEW ERA' is a commitment to fostering inclusivity and empowerment for athletes and those working in the sports industry of all genders, backgrounds, and identities," Janelle Janis, Explore Edmonton's Executive Director, Event and Business Development, told **The Daily**.

"We aim to amplify under-represented voices, bring new ideas to the forefront, and provide a global platform for future leaders in sports." Explore Edmonton



launched its campaign to showcase that its audiences show up in equal force for male and female sports.

"When someone says, 'are you going to the game tonight?' they're not just referring to men's sports," said Janis.

"They're also referring to the many female sporting events that take place in our city. We know, however, that this isn't the case for every city and there is still

a lot of progress that needs to be made when it comes to equal representation in sports."

Edmonton, the capital city of the Canadian province of Alberta, has established an impressive reputation as a host of international events, building a varied portfolio spanning multiple sports.

At SportAccord 2024 this week, Explore Edmonton has had an ideal opportunity to expand on discussions with International Federations and ultimately continue to drive change within the global sports landscape.

Janis said: "Gender equality is paramount. It's not just about fairness; it's about unlocking the full potential of athletes and creating a more inclusive and diverse sporting landscape.

"At Explore Edmonton, we understand the pivotal role that host cities play in promoting equal representation. That's why we're proud to lead the charge in demonstrating our unwavering support for this important cause."

HOCKEY PREPARES FOR NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

IF FOCUS

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) is preparing to launch a new long-term growth strategy in the coming months that will aim to drive the sport's expansion beyond what promises to be a "fantastic" Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The FIH told **The Daily** that its 10-year "Hockey Revolution" roadmap will come to an end this year, giving the governing body an opportunity to shape a new approach for the future.

"We will define a new strategy for the FIH that will have a main objective to greatly boost the growth of hockey in all corners of the globe," the FIH stated, before outlining the International Federation's other key areas of focus.

"As a major part of our development activities, the implementation of our Empowerment and Engagement Strategy will continue, for the benefit of all National Associations, and in particular the less privileged ones.

"We're looking forward to fantastic Olympic hockey tournaments in Paris. The Olympic Games offer a great opportunity



Image: FIH-WorldSportPics

to showcase our sport to the world. On the back of our global Sustainability Strategy for hockey launched in November 2022, we will pursue our efforts to always improve our standards in this field. With 2024 marking the centenary of the FIH, we will take advantage of this great milestone to organise numerous promotional activities."

Hockey is already established as a truly global sport, played on all continents and across the 140 nations that are FIH Members. Furthermore, with 51% of participants worldwide being female – and an ongoing determination to do more in terms of diversity and inclusion – the sport can justifiably lay claim to being a gender-balanced activity.

Building on this, in June last year, the governing body launched a first-of-its-

kind project, the FIH Empowerment and Engagement Strategy.

The strategy aims to empower Continental Federations and National Associations for them to lead the development of hockey in their respective continents and countries, on the basis of four main pillars: more places to play, a boost to coaching, more opportunities to compete and more tools.

"Since we strongly believe in the power of sport to be a catalyst for positive change in society, we joined the Centre for Sport and Human Rights and the UN Sports for Climate Action Framework last year," the FIH added. "We also launched a global initiative for sustainability, called 'Give Back to Forest'.

"Furthermore, FIH President Tayyab Ikram had regular interactions with the Olympic Movement, including the International Olympic Committee and its President, Thomas Bach."

The IF also staged the first-ever FIH Hockey5s World Cup in January 2024 in Oman.

"It was a resounding success," the FIH added. "Hockey5s is a very fast, short and dynamic format that has a great potential to increase our membership and fan base."

EXPLORE EDMONTON

THIS IS THE GAME

DISCOVER WOMEN'S SPORTS IN EDMONTON

SQUASH BOOSTED BY LA28 INCLUSION

The addition of squash to the programme for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games has been rated as "potentially the greatest and most globally celebrated milestone in the sport's 160-year history" by the President of the World Squash Federation (WSF).

Zena Wooldridge told **The Daily** that the new status will provide opportunities for the body to accelerate the delivery of its strategy – a move that will include developing new commercial opportunities and extending the network of partners and supporters.

Olympic preparations are now at the top of the

list of the WSF's priorities over the next 12 months as it liaises with the LA28 Organising Committee and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to determine the venue, schedule and qualification process for the Games.

Wooldridge said the Professional Squash Association (PSA) and US Squash will also take part in that process as the sport's key partners in the Olympic project.

Globally, Wooldridge added that the WSF is aware of the need to grow the sport at a grassroots level in an increasingly competitive

space and to achieve greater gender parity in coaching and refereeing, particularly at national and international levels.

However, Wooldridge also noted that, at the WSF World Team Championships in December 2023, the men's and women's competitions took place alongside each other, rather than separately, for the first time.

A similar format will be adopted for the World Junior Team Championships in July 2024 and the WSF has also launched a series of women's coaching courses.

Wooldridge, who took part in a Plenary Conference

Programme discussion on Wednesday about how sports can work together to address challenges, said: "The aim is to increase the proportion of female coaches around the world, ultimately leading to more female national coaches. We have received a very positive response to this initiative from our coaching community."

She added that the WSF has also completed a review, resulting in more effective skills and a better gender balance in its Commissions, with task groups set up to address specific issues such as sustainability, transgender athletes and safeguarding.



The International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) is aiming to capitalise on a sharp increase in grassroots participation as one of its main priorities over the coming year.

More people are discovering the health benefits of weightlifting in gyms. In

Australia, for example, women participating in amateur weightlifting grew fivefold between 2016 and 2022, while the number of men almost tripled according to the Australian Sports Commission.

“The popularity of recreational weightlifting has skyrocketed in recent years and, now more than ever, our Federation must recognise the immense potential of leveraging this increased interest internationally,” IWF President Mohammed Jalood told *The Daily*. “By harnessing this interest, we can continue to engage new audiences and empower weightlifters around the world to lead active lives, all while advancing the sport of weightlifting on a global stage.”

The IWF has also identified the need to embrace new technology.

“In an increasingly interconnected world, which has revolutionised how our sport is consumed, we must continue to harness new digital technologies to engage with a wider audience and to foster a deeper relationship with weightlifting fans across the world,” Jalood said.

“In today’s dynamic and busy sporting landscape, our Federation is in an increasingly competitive market, so we must ensure that we are continually evolving and adapting.

“By embracing change, fostering innovation and remaining committed to serving audiences both new and old, our Federation can continue to inspire, unite and serve the world through weightlifting.”



Sport Liverpool has been at the SportAccord World Sport & Business Summit 2024 at the International Convention Centre this week with the aim of establishing closer ties with sport’s major players.

Sport Liverpool, which is a SportAccord 2024 Bronze Partner, represents sports venues and organisations across a part of the UK that is renowned worldwide for its sporting pedigree.

Not only is the city home to two of the world’s most famous football clubs – Liverpool FC and Everton FC, with the latter’s state-of-the-art new stadium set to open in 2025 – but Liverpool has also hosted major sporting events such as the

PARTNER FOCUS

2019 Netball World Cup and the 2022 World Gymnastics Championships in recent years.

The 154th Open will take place at Royal Birkdale in 2026, bringing top-level golf back to the region, and Everton’s new stadium will host UEFA Euro 2028 football. Meanwhile, outside sport, Liverpool staged the Eurovision Song Contest 2023.

“Sport Liverpool is keen to continue to build on and grow relationships with International Federations, rights holders and governing bodies to showcase what the Liverpool City Region can offer their

event and fanbase, as well as exploring partnership opportunities, to co-create and deliver new and existing events in the future,” Clare Briegal, Chair of the Sport Liverpool Board, told *The Daily*.

“There are opportunities to maximise the benefits of events such as the World Gymnastics Championships and Eurovision Song Contest to ensure a broader calendar of events that offer a pipeline of delivery over the next five years intertwined with the events already on the calendar.

“There are also opportunities to showcase our stunning city on the banks of the River Mersey, beautiful countryside and beaches, fabulous

connectivity and a passionate and knowledgeable audience and volunteer base that provide a warm and appreciative welcome to visiting athletes. The walkability of our city centre allows athletes to train and compete within walking distance of competition venues, allowing them flexibility and the opportunity to explore the city and region.

“The challenge is to ensure that we focus our attention on winnable events that are the right fit for the people and places within our area, and to ensure that attention is focused not only on economic impact and global appeal, but also on participation and social engagement.”

FEI LIFTED BY MARKET RESEARCH

The FEI, the global governing body of equestrian sports, has been “thoroughly enthused” by the results of recent market research studies into the global equestrian market, according to the International Federation’s President, Ingmar De Vos.

The research found that there are 335 million riders and more than 44,000 riding schools and clubs worldwide, with the industry supporting 4.2 million jobs.

“It’s not surprising to anyone that the horse and any horse-related activities would attract a large number of people, but what we discovered is that equestrian sport specifically has an incredibly large audience of 1.7 billion global fans,” said De Vos, who was this week confirmed as the next President of the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF).

“Thanks to the research, we also have some really strong insights into their interests.”

Modern pentathlon’s global governing body (UIPM) is amplifying its exposure thanks to the launch of a new show for digital and broadcast platforms.

The show is framed to provide the inside track on athlete experiences, enhancing the storytelling aspect that provides a compelling narrative to accompany the sporting action.

“We launched a new TV and social media show, entitled Modern Pentathlon: A Passion for Paris, to follow athletes on their journey and build excitement for global audiences,” UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann told *The Daily*.

“In Paris, for the first time, Olympic sports fans will see a captivating 90-minute showcase of all five pentathlon disciplines – a format that was successfully introduced in 2022.”

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GROWING PARTICIPATION FOCUS FOR BANDY

Federation of International Bandy (FIB) Vice-President Attila Adamfi is encouraged by the continuing growth of the sport, in spite of geopolitical headwinds.

The FIB is continuing to focus on growing participation and looking to improve its sustainable competition structure for men’s, women’s and youth events in addition to its online presence.

“It is great that despite the different challenges, the sport is growing and the interest to play bandy – indoor, outdoor, boys, girls, youth or masters – is growing,” Adamfi told *The Daily*.

“Naturally we suffer from the current geopolitical situation. Purely from a sporting perspective, the absence of Russia, one of

the best teams and hosts of events, creates different challenges for FIB.”

Environmental challenges are also top of the agenda for the sport’s leaders.

“Being a traditional outdoor sport, we cannot ignore climate change and its negative consequences for the outdoor arenas,” Adamfi said. “Consequently, more and more indoor – often multisport – arenas provide bandy opportunities.”

This is an important year for the governing body, with a new set of statutes and elections scheduled for June.

“While continuing our governance reforms by introducing best practices and transparent processes, a significant milestone in 2024 will be the FIB elections

according to the new statutes and regulations,” Adamfi said.

“Understanding the potential of social media, we aim to increase our audience and their engagement.

“In the area of clean sport, while we continue testing, we will put more focus on the first pillar of clean sport: education.”

The new statutes include good governance improvements, term limits, athlete representation, and gender balance.

The FIB Executive Committee unanimously approved plans to hold its Congress and election on 8 June in Stockholm, Sweden. It also awarded the 2025 World Championships for men and women to Lidköping in Sweden.

DID YOU KNOW?

Birmingham’s famous Edgbaston Stadium has been the home of Warwickshire County Cricket Club since 1885, but the Birmingham & District Cricket League, established three years later in 1888, was the first recorded cricket league in the world to take to the field.

BADMINTON PUTS FOCUS ON COMMERCIAL GROWTH

Q&A: THOMAS LUND, SECRETARY GENERAL, BADMINTON WORLD FEDERATION

Badminton is booming on the back of a busy schedule of major events and a huge base of participants and followers, according to the Secretary General of the sport's global governing body.

How do you reflect on an exciting 12 months for badminton and the Badminton World Federation (BWF)?

TL: "We enjoyed a strong 2023 with a full calendar of tournaments without disruption. This was headlined by our return to China for the first time in three years, which brought many benefits. We couldn't be more pleased with the outcomes of our BWF Major Championships – the TotalEnergies BWF Sudirman Cup Finals 2023 in Suzhou, China, the TotalEnergies BWF World Championships 2023 in Copenhagen, Denmark, and the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals 2023 in Hangzhou, China. We received tremendous feedback from our stakeholders including title sponsors TotalEnergies and HSBC, and a big thank you to our tournament hosts for their high-quality delivery."

Away from the sporting action, what were the major developments for the BWF?

TL: "We reviewed, shaped and approved the new BWF Strategic Plan with the five strategic priorities of entertainment, participation, athletes, partnerships, and capacity building continuing to underpin our course. There is significant continuity with the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan with



Image: BWF/Badmintonphoto

the same five strategic priorities being retained. However, there is a new or greater emphasis in some areas, with scope for increased focus on commercial development to secure growth in prize money for players, a revamped tournament commercial model to optimise revenue and profitability, greater focus on capacity-building programmes, and an elevated importance on sustainability and safeguarding within the sport."

What are the priority projects and areas of focus for you now and over the next 12 months?

TL: "Much of 2023 was spent looking at how we maintain our relevance against our competitors, ensuring that badminton's market share is growing, and how the execution of our sponsorship and broadcast offerings – as

"We know the demand from interested commercial parties is there, and this matches the potential from our growing fan and participation base"

well as potential new revenue streams – will help us deliver on our goals, ambitions and expectations. This will continue to be a key goal for 2024 and beyond.

"We currently have a healthy platform to work from thanks to our partnership with Infront Sports & Media, loyal supporters in the form of HSBC and TotalEnergies, as well as a broadcast footprint of 63 media partners in 119 territories, not to mention a global fanbase of 709 million fans and 392 million active participants. The aim is to expand upon this reach with a goal of getting into more markets.

"We want to make sure that as a sport we are not only catching up to the standards of our competitors, but surpassing them and then setting



Thomas Lund

our own industry benchmarks. We have lofty goals for the sport. We know the demand from interested commercial parties is there, and this matches the potential from our growing fan and participation base. We now need to build for the future. So, we have a busy period ahead of us as we look to remodel and reshape our elite tournaments, our star player packages and – intrinsically linked to that – our commercial models for success."

What are the most important opportunities and challenges for your organisation?

TL: "Building capacity remains a key focus as a lot of what we do hinges on our Continental Confederations and Member Associations also being on board with our vision, and equally having the capacity to be able to deliver badminton events, projects, and activities in their territories for the future growth of the game. This involves grassroots initiatives and enabling programmes for entry-level and junior players, coaches and technical officials for both badminton and para badminton, as well as those topics connected closer to the commercial side of the business such as the elite tournament structures and star player production.

"We have our vision of where we want to be, but there must be constant consultation with our membership so that their capacity measures up to our ambitions and that our growth is sustainable at all levels. This, of course, means greater investment

by the BWF and also innovation and new partnerships to ensure we are best equipped to take on this journey."



Image: WFDF

WFDF READY TO FLY IN CHENGDU

IF FOCUS

The World Flying Disc Federation (WFDF) is preparing for The World Games Chengdu 2025, one of its most important events, as it embarks on a new era.

The organisation is hosting seven international events this year, including World Championships for both ultimate and disc golf in the Australian cities of Brisbane and Perth, respectively.

These serve as the qualifiers for next year's Games in China, which WFDF President Robert Rauch described as "the highlight of our quadrennial event cycle".

The body has also completed its updated strategic plan through to 2028, focusing on transitioning to "WFDF 3.0", with the aim of upgrading its operations.

"For our initial steps in implementing WFDF 3.0, we have recently hired three additional members of staff to provide us with the resources we need in the areas of communications and social media, member services and sport development, and office management," Rauch told *The Daily*.

"So, we will be focused on maximising the additional value they bring. We are hoping to

add at least five new countries as Members, bringing our total to 112 Member National Federations by the end of the year.

"We are also looking to support several Members in obtaining recognition by their National Olympic Committees, and to obtain recognition by at least one of the Olympic Continental Associations."

The structure of the International Federation ensures that flying disc sports are supported by a "robust global organisation" that can provide support to Members, as well as host world-class events, and promote and grow the sport at a grassroots level, according to Rauch. Increasing the visibility of the WFDF's disciplines to a standard matching Olympic sports is also a focus.

Flying disc missed out on a place at the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics, but has not given up on its Olympic dream and is now targeting the Brisbane 2032 Games.

Rauch claimed flying disc is an ideal candidate for the event due to its "youth appeal, gender equality, and universality".

He also said that inclusion in the Olympics would "provide the visibility and credibility to support our objectives and help us grow our sport".

THAILAND'S AMBITION

Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) Governor Dr Gongsak Yodmani believes this year's Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games will provide a timely showcase of the country's hosting capabilities.

SAT, a SportAccord World Sport & Business Summit 2024 Bronze Partner, is looking forward with great anticipation to the event, which will take place from 21-30 November in Bangkok and Chonburi.

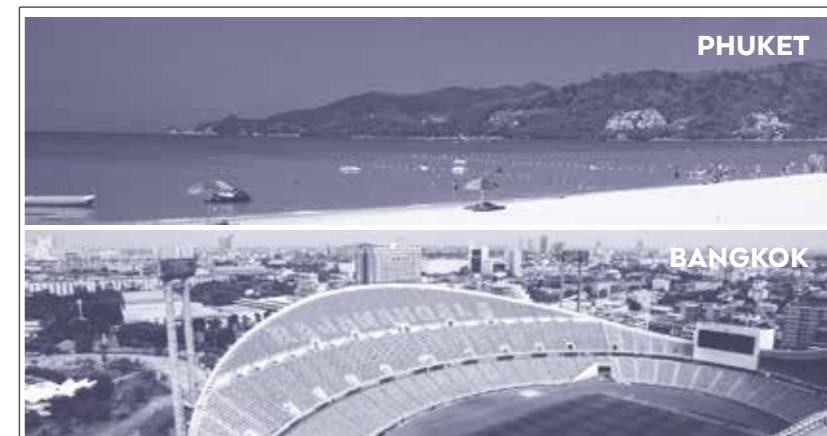
"We are now working very hard towards hosting the Games," the SAT Governor told *The Daily*. "We want the world to know that Thailand is truly a country of sports destinations."

The event will take place at a time when the Thai Government is placing an ever-greater emphasis on the importance of sports tourism, including via a National Sports Development Fund.

Meanwhile, technological developments are also under the spotlight for SAT.

"Technology changes affect sports in terms of challenges and opportunities, and they force us to prepare with appropriate human resources," the SAT Governor said, before highlighting Thailand's event-hosting infrastructure.

"Thailand has opened its door to become the world's sports destination. Whether you wish to organise sports competitions, International Federation meetings or athlete training sessions, Thailand is the answer."



PHUKET

BANGKOK



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BURIRAM

CHIANGMAI

The International Aikido Federation (IAF) is initiating a restructuring programme as it gears up to build on continuing global growth.

The organisation now has 85 Members in comparison with just 37 in 2016, and IAF Chairman Wilko Vriesman said there will be more to come as the governing body's new projects take effect.

Vriesman added that the IAF has seen a rush of interest following the World Combat Games 2023 in Riyadh.

"The IAF is expanding rapidly in general, and especially in the Arab and African regions, and this is due to our presence and participation in the World Combat Games," he told *The Daily*. "It has had a tremendous spin-off in these regions with countries including Algeria, Morocco, Syria, Iraq, Congo and Kenya taking steps to become Members of the IAF"

Vriesman said that the rising interest also led to the formation of the Arab Aikido Federation, which will promote inclusion in regional competitions.

"This expansion has strengthened the global footprint and brand of the sport, and as part of the restructuring to adapt and cope with this growth, the IAF has focused on youth and gender projects to stimulate and consolidate co-operation among its Members," he said.

GOLD COAST UPLIFT

Staging the SportAccord World Sport & Business Summit 2019 in Gold Coast was a key step in securing the 2032 Olympic Games for Queensland, according to Tourism & Events Queensland CEO Patricia O'Callaghan.

O'Callaghan told *The Daily* that Queensland is still feeling the benefits of hosting SportAccord 2019 – with the Olympics set to land in Brisbane in eight years' time.

"Hosting the International Olympic Committee at the 2019 Gold Coast edition of SportAccord was a game-changer for Queensland," O'Callaghan said.

"Having them here in person to see our world-class facilities, the uniquely Queensland way we host events and to sink their toes into that magnificent sand and surf the coast is so famous for, was certainly significant in sealing the deal to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games."



PARTNER FOCUS

O'Callaghan added that with eight years to go, more than 80% of venues identified in the masterplan are in place or will be temporary, and work is already taking place on shaping the legacy.

"We are already well set up to host and, now we are on that green-and-gold runway to the Games, we are eager to continue working with International Federations, rights holders and organising committees to bring sporting events here in the lead-up to and following the Games to maximise opportunities for our state," O'Callaghan said.

THE BIG INTERVIEW: IAN METCALFE

Ian Metcalfe is confident about the event-hosting prospects of Birmingham and the West Midlands...

AN EXTRAORDINARY SPORTING LEGACY

Background Image: Tony Hisgett

For Ian Metcalfe, Chair of the SportAccord 2024 Executive Steering Committee, welcoming the global sports movement two years after the successful delivery of the Commonwealth Games always represented an ideal opportunity to build on the legacy of the multi-sport event.

However, as more than 1,700 of sport's most influential decision-makers return home after an inspiring week at the International Convention Centre, there are already signs of the potential impact of hosting sport's No.1 global gathering this week.

Speaking to *The Daily* on the sidelines of the Exhibition Hall on the final day of the SportAccord World Sport & Business Summit 2024, an enthusiastic Metcalfe expressed optimism for the future.

"My understanding is that there are already two or three conversations on event hosting that have commenced as a result of meetings here," he said.

"I think SportAccord will have enhanced the region's ability to host major events and their attractiveness to the International Federations that are organising them."

The population of Birmingham and the West Midlands is young and diverse, with more than 30% of inhabitants being under the age of 25. Meanwhile the region's transport links and high-quality sports venues make it an extremely attractive destination for future events.

"You have got the connectivity of the

region, you have got the diversity and inclusivity of the region, and you have got the age of the people who live in the region. If you want to capture your future spectators, then here is the place to do it.

"The opportunity to have the Olympic Movement here and show what we have got to offer at a world-class conference centre – and also to offer a sense of the regeneration

"SportAccord will have enhanced the region's ability to host major events and their attractiveness to the International Federations"

of the centre of Birmingham – was really important to us."

In addition to numerous insightful conference sessions, SportAccord 2024 featured a "Connect & Cultivate" programme for delegates that featured cultural activities.

This gave attendees the chance to learn about the West Midlands' sporting history – and its bright future.

Metcalfe hopes this popular element of SportAccord 2024 has helped to enhance perceptions of Birmingham and the West Midlands as a whole.

"If they have left with a greater understanding of Birmingham and the

West Midlands, and that what they might have heard about the area in the 1980s and 1990s as a failing area of the country is not true, then it will have been a great success," he said.

Commenting directly on SportAccord 2024, Metcalfe added: "I think it has been pretty extraordinary. It has been everything we wanted it to be as a host city and a host region.

"The feedback from the delegates, International Federations and SportAccord Managing Director Martin Gibbs has been off the charts.

"They have loved Birmingham and getting to know the city, which for me as a proud Brummie has been great. For many who had not been here before, they realised what a great city it is.

"They have loved being able to just walk from their hotels to a world-class convention centre on their doorstep, in the heart of a big city."

Metcalfe also believes the positive impact of hosting SportAccord 2024 will ripple into the rest of the country.

"The great thing about the United Kingdom is there are so many brilliant different cities and regions that are ready to host events," he added.

For Birmingham and the West Midlands, though, it seems clear that the SportAccord effect will live on beyond five fantastic days in April 2024 – and the future of the city and region as a major sports event destination is unquestionably bright.

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OBS OUTLINES PARIS 2024 COVERAGE

MEDIAACCORD ROUND-UP

MediaAccord attendees heard yesterday how the International Olympic Committee’s permanent host broadcaster, OBS, is aiming to provide coverage of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games that reflects the gender equality on display among the competitors.

The event is set to feature the same number of female athletes as male for the first time ever, but it is not just the field of play where gender parity efforts are being made.

“[Gender equality] is not the case in media and we need to be very honest about that,” said Yiannis Exarchos, Chief Executive Officer of OBS, and Executive Director of the Olympic Channel.

“For OBS, it has been a constant effort. We have completely changed the balance within our own permanent staff and hopefully within two years it will be a 50/50 split. In key positions, like broadcast managers in Paris, two-thirds of them are going to be women.



Yiannis Exarchos speaks during a MediaAccord session

“We have also done several new projects and we have trained new young camera operators and will use them in the Games.”

In the past, media companies have focused on particular athletes or people in the crowd considered to be attractive to the

audience, but the approach will change in Paris.

“We will be using the updated version of portrayal guidelines that we are developing in the IOC to ensure that everyone working for us will respect the best athletes in the world for who they are – the best athletes in the world,” Exarchos said. “It will not be because they are men or women, attractive or have a bigger sex appeal. They are there for their athleticism and this is what shall be showcased by every single shot we take.”

TODAY AT A GLANCE

SOCIAL:

Morning activity: Walking Tour of Birmingham (08:00-09:00)

SPORT EVENT DENMARK

Uniting People

Uniting People

