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OCEANIA REPORT 2017/18

EVENTS

In 2017 to 2018 major event activity in Oceania continued apace –

1 – Oceania Championships, Singapore, December 2017 – our Regional Championships for 2017 were combined with the Asia Pacific event, with some 150 lifters from a dozen nations taking part. Top teams were Australia, Nauru and New Zealand and the success of this event was a spur to larger multi-region contests.

2 – Asia Pacific Challenge, Sydney, April 2018 – this invitational event saw the breakthrough of mainland China taking part in an international event for the first time, as well as Hong Kong, Nauru, New Zealand, et al being involved. A sensation was two Australians setting World Records, Nathan Tanis in 83kg at 300kg in the Squat and Sane Faatoe (also of Samoa) in the 120kg Bench Press with 236kg, whilst as always Nauru was to the fore.

3 – FIBO China, Shanghai, August 2018 – this was another select invitational event in front of a large fitness event. Yurika Kepae, Jezza Upea and Cameron McIntosh lifted big weights and inspired a frenzied crowd reaction.

4 – World Powerlifting Championships, Virginia, October 2018 – the OPF's new affiliation with World Powerlifting took our nations to the Worlds in USA. In this tougher field Australia and Nauru were still prominent. Big wins came from Liz Craven in the Womens 53kg including World Records in the Squat and Total, Anthony Krznar at 120kg and Jezza Upea at 120+kg.

Those results showed a healthy trend toward high level performances from our athletes, reflecting the growth of our sport especially in Australia, New Zealand and Nauru. A challenge for 2019 onwards is to also enhance development in some of our smaller nations.

ANTI-DOPING

Once again strong government supported anti-doping programmes were in 2018 conducted in Australia and New Zealand. Those were supplemented by user-pays testing at major competitions and on out-of competition targets. Of concern were the anti-doping rule violations that emerge due to careless supplement use and educational efforts must continue in that area.





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A necessary future development is the establishment of national anti-doping programmes in Pacific nations. At present competition testing at major events is the only point of access to athletes from those smaller nations and this is a limited substitute for regular in & out of competition testing at the national level.

AFFILIATION, ADMINISTRATION & DEVELOPMENT

2017 to 2018 saw some momentous events in the history of the OPF. Much more than can be stated here could be written and indeed some matters remain sub judice at present. However the essential features of political and legal events in 2017 were that –

- the OPF and Powerlifting Australia exited the IPF, in reflection of our stance against maladministration in that body
- that departure and the events leading up to it were contested in various Courts but in the meantime that left a void for us, whilst very many concluded that whatever the outcome of the legalities there was not a viable future for us in the IPF. Thus the OPF played a key role in the formation of a new world body, World Powerlifting Ltd
- that vehicle, begun only in April 2018, achieved exceptional penetration in just some eight months, in the areas of nation recruitment, conduct of most of the major events described above, establishment of a more equitable set of technical rules and commencement of a WADA compliant anti-doping programme
- however fate moved on and in late October the OPF et al scored a vital win in the Luxemburg Civil Court, by which all IPF General Assemblies for 10 years were declared void, that having the effect of restoring the OPF and Powerlifting Australia to the IPF, as well as decimating the IPF's operations. As expected the IPF is, publicly at least, stonewalling but are now in the position of the coyote who has run off the cliff. Part of the denial of reality has been the setting up of puppet Oceania and Australian pseudo-IPF groups, which have sputtered on via an unsustainable injection of funds and which have gained what operational strength they do have by gathering up opponents of anti-doping.

The OPF's strategic impetus will of course remain with World Powerlifting and the fresh start that body offers.





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OPERATIONS

On the ground, the bigger developments in our sport prompted some tangible, beneficial changes. The OPF website was significantly refreshed and improved. Changes in the Technical Rules saw 5 year age groups in Masters introduced, the lighter bodyweight classes rationalized and the total number of classes made gender neutral. A more coherent competition rulebook was introduced and the WADA rules for an international federation adopted.

All those changes were well-received and became set as building blocks for the sound future of our sport.

Robert Wilks
OPF President

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