



**INTERNATIONAL WHEELCHAIR  
RUGBY FEDERATION**

2019 - 2024 STRATEGIC PLAN



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Board of Directors of the International Wheelchair Rugby Federation is pleased to present the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan.

This Plan was developed after an extensive review of the progress made by the IWRF since becoming an independent federation in 2010, our last Strategic Plan, and surveying our member nations. The Board and Committee Chairs attended five days of planning meetings resulting in the new Strategic Plan.

After our review it became apparent that progress had been made in the sport technical areas of the previous plan while in several other areas expected outcomes had not been achieved.

This Strategic Plan is about “issue-driven strategies”. We have identified the areas we need to develop to ensure that we can achieve our vision statement:

### World Leader in Para Sport

The Strategic Plan addresses the keys areas that our members have identified, as well as the previous goals that were not achieved and are still relevant to the future of wheelchair rugby and the IWRF.

These seven strategic goals aim to continue the growth of our sport:

1. Strong leadership and effective governance
2. Growth and development of wheelchair rugby
3. Technical excellence in Paralympic wheelchair rugby
4. Strong partnership with World Rugby
5. Sustained increase in revenues
6. Increased involvement with wheelchair rugby variations
7. Step change in broadcast and communications

These are exciting times. The focus of the Strategic Plan is to ensure wheelchair rugby can grow within a changing environment and spread to more countries so that they too can experience being part of the wheelchair rugby family.



## A Message from the President

It is a huge pleasure and honour to be writing the introduction to the IWRF's 2019 – 2024 Strategic Plan. When this is released, I will have been in position for just over one year. Prior to my election, I was clear in my manifesto about my priorities and vision and the Strategic Plan being presented supports this. By no means is this an individual achievement and my thanks go to all those who have supported me directly, as well as the many volunteers involved in various capacities. As always, there are too many to mention specifically. Thank you all!

Our overarching vision has changed by one word, to “World Leader in Para Sport.” The word “Para” is important and reflects the IWRF's position as part of the Paralympic Movement. We will benchmark ourselves against our friends and colleagues in this Movement in everything we do.

Strengthening our partnerships will help us to be a world leader. The International Paralympic Committee is the governing body of the Paralympic Movement and the IWRF supports their aspiration for a more inclusive society for people with an impairment. Being part of this Movement is more than being a sport in the Paralympic Games. It is about how we promote ourselves through shared values.

Hogan Lovells are our global legal partner. In addition to direct legal support, they also provide the IWRF with guidance around other areas of our business.

World Rugby have been a partner of the IWRF for over ten years and a significant thing I admire is how their values are integral in everything they do.

In May 2019, the IWRF Board and senior leadership were hosted by World Rugby at World Rugby House in Dublin which provided the opportunity to strengthen the partnership. One of our challenges is around capacity. Working more closely with World Rugby enables the additional benefit of accessing their expertise in areas such as communication, anti-doping, education, and officiating.

Partnerships are two-way, and the IWRF will continue to engage and embrace wheelchair sport development worldwide. We are proud to support World Rugby and their vision of “Rugby – a sport for all, true to its values”.

My challenge to all of us is how we, as a sport, can be truly inclusive.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R Allcroft". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Richard Allcroft  
IWRF President



# HISTORY OF WHEELCHAIR RUGBY

Since its early origins in Winnipeg, Canada in the late 1970's, the sport of wheelchair rugby has continued to expand and evolve. Originating from five men in a rehabilitation gymnasium, today the global wheelchair rugby family has grown to include more than three thousand athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers, along with many times that number of fans around the world. Wheelchair rugby is now played in some form in over fifty nations, and many more are interested in starting.

Since the first Wheelchair Rugby World Championship held in Nottwil, Switzerland in 1995, the IWRF has developed an increasingly active competition calendar. The most recent World Championship, our seventh, was held in Sydney, Australia. Sydney was also where wheelchair rugby debuted as a full medal sport at the 2000 Paralympic Games, following a successful demonstration event at the Atlanta 1996 Paralympic Games. Thirty countries are on the IWRF World Ranking List as active participants in international competition.

Since 2010, the governance and growth of wheelchair rugby has been under the direction of the IWRF, the global governing body responsible for the sport. The purpose of the IWRF is to develop, promote, and regulate the sport of wheelchair rugby around the world.



## Acknowledgment

The IWRF would like to thank our sport partner, World Rugby, for their generous contribution to the IWRF 2019 Strategic Planning Conference. Their professional guidance and ongoing support to our sport and Federation is appreciated. We are honored that they are part of the global wheelchair rugby family, as the IWRF is to be part of their rugby family.

## 2006 – 2018 Strategic Plans

The first IWRF Strategic Planning Conference took place in 2006. The resulting plan defined the mission and values of the sport and detailed the strategy that guided the IWRF to become an independent federation in 2010, a transition which opened a period of great opportunity for our sport. Following independence, the IWRF's 2011 Strategic Plan was developed with the support of our sport partner, World Rugby. This plan provided clear guidelines for the IWRF to become a strong and well-functioning federation, including a renewed vision and mission and key values and goals that remain the foundation of our sport and federation today. The most recent plan, established in 2015, focussed on development in new countries and establishing greater financial independence.

## 2015 Strategic Plan

The review of progress against the goals of the 2015 Strategic Plan clearly identified that in the core functional areas of governance and sport technical, the IWRF has seen success, and has significant experience and expertise. Operations over the last four-year cycle focussed on these areas, which form the foundation of what we do as a federation – they are our core business.

In areas where the IWRF has less experience and expertise, we were less successful in meeting our goals. This was notable in marketing, sponsorship, and communication.

The strategic review made it clear that the IWRF has a strong foundation in our core business; however, to continue to develop as an organization, it is necessary to build on this foundation into areas targeted for future growth. This concept forms the basis of the IWRF's 2019 – 2024 Strategic Plan.

***This sport has truly transformed my life.***

***Chuck Aoki, USA Athlete***



## 2019 - 2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2019 – 2024 Strategic Plan details seven strategic goals for the IWRF.

The first three goals represent the strong foundation in our core business of Paralympic wheelchair rugby – the original version of the sport currently played around the world. The remaining goals are the "four pillars" that will support the future growth of the IWRF and wheelchair rugby, meeting the demands of the ever-growing and changing international sport environment.

1. Strong leadership and effective governance
2. Growth and development of wheelchair rugby
3. Technical excellence in Paralympic wheelchair rugby
4. Strong partnership with World Rugby
5. Sustained increase in revenues
6. Increased involvement with wheelchair rugby variations
7. Step change in broadcast and communication

### **Strong leadership and effective governance**

As the global leader for the sport of wheelchair rugby, the IWRF must be a well-run organization that responds to the needs of its members and communicates effectively with internal and external stakeholders. It needs to ensure its Board and structure remain fit for purpose. It should also effectively engage with the broader sport community both within and outside the Paralympic movement.

### **Growth and development of wheelchair rugby**

Wheelchair rugby has seen steady growth in participation around the world since the IWRF became independent in 2010. The increasing profile of the sport has generated interest in countries and regions where the sport is not widely played. This interest should be nurtured and supported to bring more countries into the global wheelchair rugby family.

Wheelchair rugby must be welcoming to all who want to participate as athletes, coaches, officials, and volunteers, regardless of their race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, age, religion, sexuality, and gender or gender expression. The wheelchair rugby family will benefit from increased diversity in all areas of the sport.

### **Technical excellence in Paralympic wheelchair rugby**

The foundation of the IWRF remains the original sport of wheelchair rugby, first developed in 1977 and expanded around the world since then. The IWRF will continue to devote significant resources to providing world-class competitive opportunities in our core sport, supported by trained and skilled officials and classifiers. The IWRF will continue to promote sport that is free of doping, in compliance with the World Antidoping Code, and that includes a robust and fair classification system, in compliance with the IPC Classification Code.



*I liken it to violent chess*

*Amanda Lowry, New Zealand athlete*

**“I love the ultimate human potential that this sport shows”**

**Kevin Orr, Japan Coach**



## **2019 - 2024 STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **Strong partnership with World Rugby**

Our partnership with World Rugby has developed over many years. As an independent international federation, the IWRF has wide-ranging responsibilities and requires the right skill sets, resources, and capacity to fulfil them. Accessing professional advice and support from our partner World Rugby is crucial, not just to grow but to ensure we can operate effectively and efficiently. This partnership will help to develop more resources and services for our member nations.

### **Sustained increase in revenues**

The IWRF remains reliant on revenue from member nations through fees for members and individuals. In the short term this income will underpin our overall budget. Creating new and more diverse revenue streams is necessary to ensure the sustainability and growth of our organisation. By ensuring we have strong governance in place, the ability to promote our sport, increase its profile, and grow our global participation, we can make the organisation and sport more attractive in delivering benefits to sponsors and partners.

As an international federation we provide services that directly support and affect our member nations. The international competition structure requires many elements such as officials, international rules and regulations, an evidence-based classification system and technical support for events to our many organising committees. Complying with the requirements of the World Anti-Doping Agency and the International Paralympic Committee ensures our member nations can compete internationally and meet the funding requirements of many governments and corporations. Developing the sport internationally and introducing it to new countries has helped increase awareness of wheelchair rugby. Further and continuing development of the sport would benefit greatly from increased funding both internationally and at a national level.

### **Increased involvement with wheelchair rugby variations**

Engaging with variations of sports that are developing globally is a relatively new challenge for established federations. The classification system developed over many years stays true to the origins of wheelchair rugby, a sport established to support individuals with high levels of impairment. As the original, now Paralympic, version grows, more people want to play this exciting, full-contact team sport. Many people are not eligible under the current classification rules. Developing and embracing variations of our core Paralympic sport, which are open to a broader range of participants, reflects our values of inclusion and support. This strategy also creates new opportunities for growth.

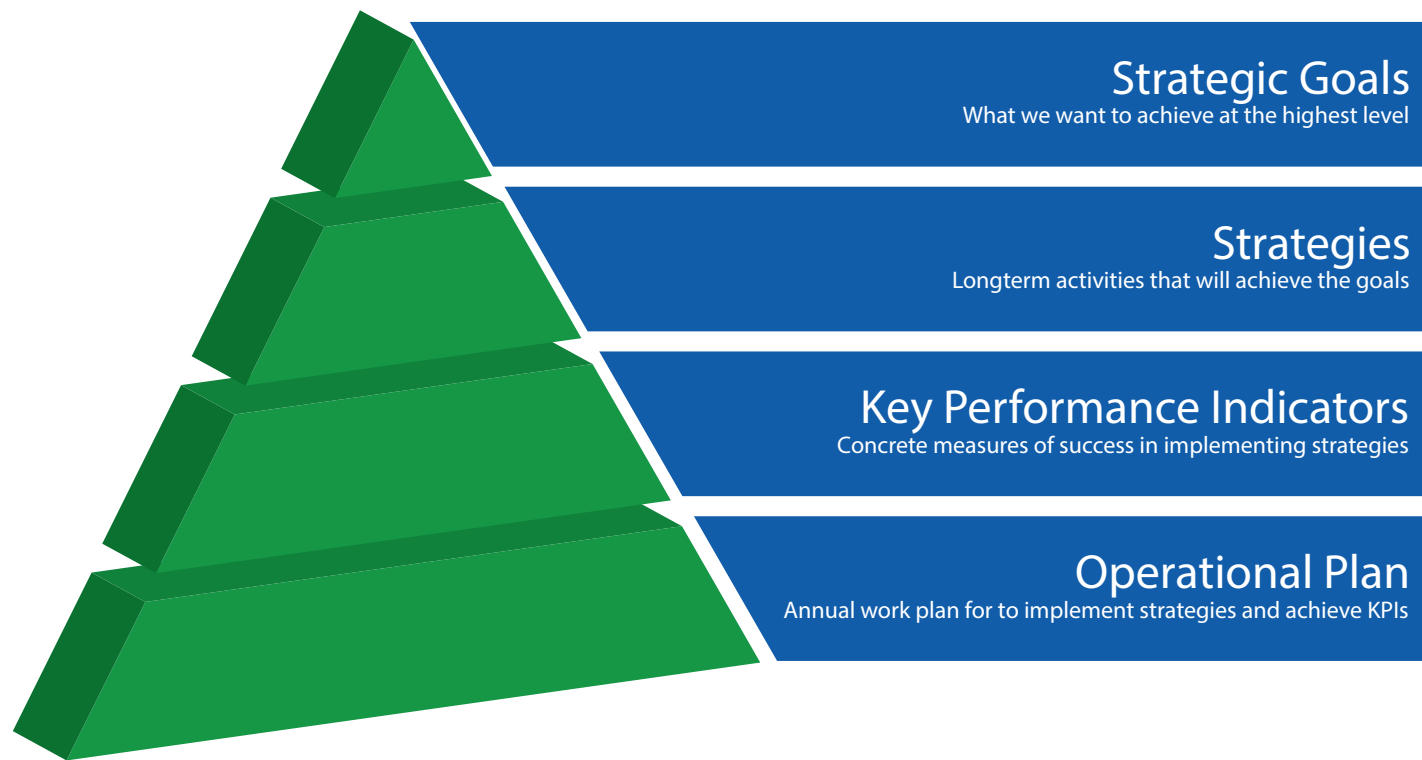
### **Step change in broadcast and communication**

Improved communication, with IWRF members specifically and the rest of the world generally, has long been a goal of the IWRF. Integrating this desire with promoting our sport has led to reflecting how we capitalise on the ever-changing technologies that are in our everyday lives. We now watch movies, news and sport in totally different ways from ten years ago. Broadcasting our sport in many different and innovative ways is our next challenge. Traditional broadcast is still extremely popular, and many sports and organisations still focus on this massive delivery method market. From this, the IWRF has embraced a "step change" strategic approach to ascertain the most effective and widespread methods for broadcast and communication to a broad range of devices, and to determine how we can develop these for our sport.

# Meeting The Strategic Goals

The seven strategic goals are the overarching ambitions of the IWRF's five-year Strategic Plan. Meeting these goals will require detailed work in many areas. To ensure this, we have developed strategies for each goal, which define the broad actions that will be undertaken to achieve them. Each goal also has a set of key performance indicators (KPIs), each clearly defined with a target date. The KPIs show that the strategies have been effectively implemented to reach the Strategic Goals.

The KPIs will be used to develop the annual IWRF Operational Plans, which detail short-term goals and specific tasks for IWRF personnel on an annual basis.



Roles and responsibilities will be clarified using the Responsible / Accountable / Consulted / Informed (RACI) model. For each KPI, RACI details who is:

- Responsible - to achieve it
- Accountable - to ensure it is done
- Consulted - to ensure appropriate stakeholder input
- Informed - of progress and completion

## Vision

WORLD LEADER IN PARA SPORT

## Mission

GROWING AND SUPPORTING THE WHEELCHAIR RUGBY FAMILY

## Value Proposition

Wheelchair rugby is an exciting sport that provides inspiring role models and changes lives

## Values

**Passion:** The wheelchair rugby family is passionate about our sport, which creates excitement, emotion, and a sense of belonging within the global rugby family.

**Inclusion:** The wheelchair rugby family is open and welcoming to all who share the values of the sport; there are opportunities for everyone who wants to be involved.

**Athlete Focus:** The wheelchair rugby family recognizes and respects that athletes, who created and developed the game, are at the centre of the sport.

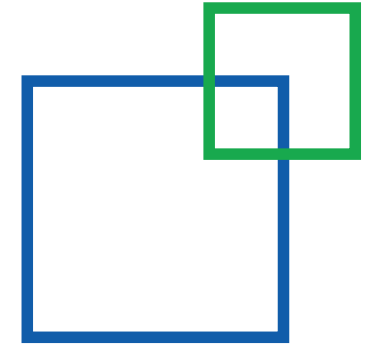
**Respect:** The wheelchair rugby family has respect for athletes, teammates and opponents, coaches, officials, spectators, and everyone involved in the sport.

**Integrity:** The wheelchair rugby family acts with integrity, recognizing that honesty and fair play are essential components of success in sport and life.

**Support:** The wheelchair rugby family supports all involved in the sport, helping to remove barriers to participation and sharing our knowledge and passion.

## Strategic Goals

1. Strong leadership and effective governance
2. Growth and development of wheelchair rugby
3. Technical excellence in Paralympic wheelchair rugby
4. Strong partnership with World Rugby
5. Sustained increase in revenues
6. Increased involvement with wheelchair rugby variations
7. Step change in broadcast and communication



# Strategies

For each of the strategic goals, the IWRF will adopt strategies to ensure the goals are reached.

## 1. Strong leadership and effective governance

- Approve the Strategic Plan
- Review and revise the organisation's structure
- Review and update governance documents as required
- Implement a revised Board structure
- Improve internal and external communications by implementing efficient systems
- Engage and influence important stakeholders

## 2. Growth and development of wheelchair rugby

- Strengthen the middle tier nations
- Improve communications with IWRF members
- New member development in Africa
- Support regional development programmes
- Develop training resources for all members
- Increase participation by underrepresented groups
- Implement observer programmes at events
- Monitor activity in member nations

## 3. Technical excellence in Paralympic wheelchair rugby

- Collaborate across functional areas
- Improve communication
- Professional development of IWRF officials and leaders
- Maintain anti-doping programme
- Expand research across technical areas

## 4. Strong partnership with World Rugby

- Link the Wheelchair Rugby World Championship with the Rugby World Cup
- Endorse links between IWRF and World Rugby member organizations
- Provision of partnership models for IWRF and World Rugby national members
- Identify departmental synergies with World Rugby

## 5. Sustained increase in revenues

- Explore potential for WRWC / RWC sponsorship revenue
- Audit IWRF assets for sponsorships and partnerships
- Explore merchandising opportunities
- Leverage broadcast and communication technologies
- Ensure sponsor activation and protection
- Increase revenues from grants and foundations
- Maintain member revenues

## 6. Increased involvement with wheelchair rugby variations

- Focus on three distinct formats: Paralympic wheelchair rugby; open wheelchair rugby; and wheelchair rugby sevens
- Engage with the organizations managing the three major streams of open wheelchair rugby (Korean Open League, Invictus Games, Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby Fives)
- Standardize international rules for open wheelchair rugby including classification
- Develop governance model for open wheelchair rugby within the IWRF
- Support wheelchair rugby sevens in developing a pathway towards recognition by the IWRF
- Involve World Rugby in engagements with organizations managing wheelchair rugby variations

## 7. Step change in broadcast and communication

- Engage current, innovative people that are knowledgeable and experienced in current and future trends and technology
- Produce an integrated communication strategy and process
- Engage and educate IWRF members
- Develop a multi-channel broadcast strategy



# Key Performance Indicators

Key performance indicators have been developed for each strategic goal. The KPIs will allow the IWRF to measure progress in implementing the Strategic Plan.

## 1. Strong leadership and effective governance

Key Performance Indicator	Target	R	A	C	I
Strategic Plan approved	2019 Q4	CEO	Board	Members	Members
Review of organizational structure completed	2019 Q4	CEO	Board	Committees	Members
Revisions to organizational structure completed	2020 Q4	CEO	Board	Committees	Members
Member Registration System implemented for communications	2020 Q1	CEO	CEO	Committees	Members
Governance documents reviewed	2020 Q3	CEO	Board	Committees	Members
Mid-term review of the Strategic Plan including environmental scan completed	2021 Q3	CEO	Board	Members	Members
Governance documents revised	2022 Q3	Board	Members	Committees	Members
Strategic plan for next cycle developed	2024 Q3	Board	Members	Committees	Members
IWRF General Assemblies conducted in accordance with event KPIs	2024 Q4	CEO	Board	Committees	Members

## 2. Growth and development of wheelchair rugby

Key Performance Indicator	Target	R	A	C	I
Diversity strategy developed	2020 Q3	CEO	Board	Committees	Members
Event hosting resource published	2021 Q1	Committees	CEO	Committees	Board
Coaching pathway developed and published	2021 Q2	Committees	CEO	Members	Board
Observers program conducted at IWRF championships	2021 Q3	Committees	CEO	Committees	Board
International women's wheelchair rugby competition conducted	2021 Q4	CEO	Board	Committees	Members
Diversity strategy implemented	2023 Q1	CEO	Board	Committees	Members
Coaching resources developed and published	2023 Q1	Committees	CEO	Members	Board
Member surveys completed	2023 Q4	Committees	CEO	Committees	Board
Two to four clinics held in Africa	2023 Q4	Committees	CEO	Committees	Members
Two international competitions held in Africa	2024 Q4	Committees	CEO	Committees	Members
Six to eight African nations play wheelchair rugby	2024 Q4	Committees	CEO	Committees	Members

*“You only have to feel the atmosphere of excitement at a wheelchair rugby match to understand the growth potential of the sport. It has the potential to highlight role models who can drive commitment of Governments to enhancing disability rights and compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.”*

*Yasmin Waljee, International Pro Bono Director, Hogan Lovells*



# Key Performance Indicators

## 3. Technical excellence in Paralympic wheelchair rugby

Key Performance Indicator	Target	R	A	C	I
Research committee established	2020 Q2	CEO	Board	Committees	Members
TD Mentoring Program established	2020 Q4	Committees	CEO	Committees	Board
Standards for wheelchair rugby uniforms published	2020 Q1	Committees	CEO	Committees	Board
Standards for wheelchair rugby equipment established	2021 Q1	Committees	CEO	Committees	Board
Train the Trainer program established	2021 Q4	Committees	CEO	Committees	Board
Competition calendar delivered against event KPIs	2024 Q4	CEO	Board	Committees	Members
Compliance with WADA Code is maintained	2024 Q4	CEO	Board	WADA	Members
Compliance with IPC Classification Code is maintained	2024 Q4	Committees	CEO	Committees	Board

*“You forget you have a disability and it is that moment when you are fully alive.”*

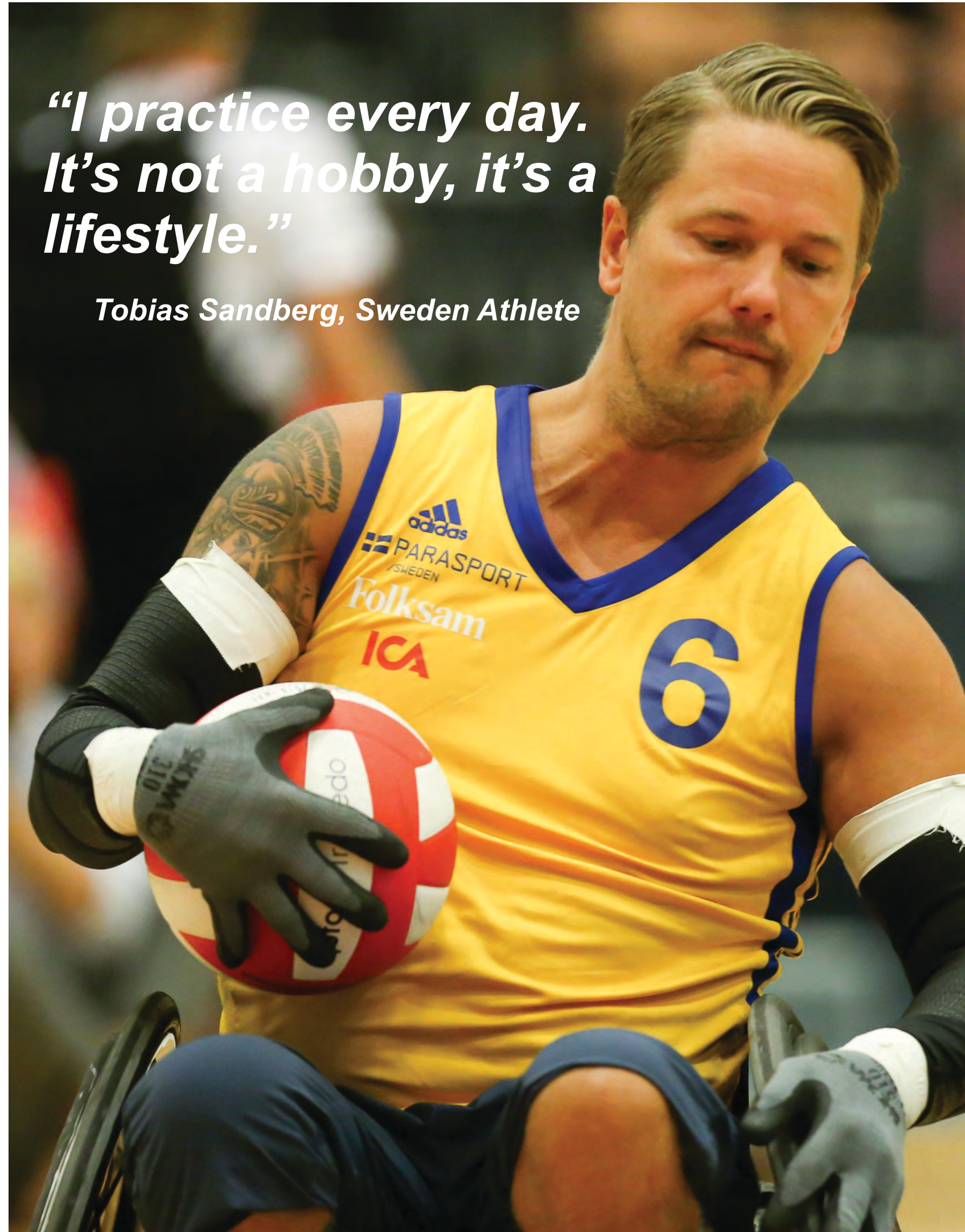
*Jason Regier, Danish Coach, USA*

## 4. Strong Partnership with World Rugby

Key Performance Indicator	Target	R	A	C	I
Twenty-year partnership agreement is reached with World Rugby	2020 Q2	CEO	President	Board	Members
Endorsement communication published by the IWRF and World Rugby	2020 Q3	CEO	President	Board	Members
Partnership models distributed to IWRF and World Rugby member organizations	2020 Q2	CEO	President	Board	Members
Terms of the partnership agreement are implemented	2020 Q4	CEO	President	Board	Members

*“I practice every day. It’s not a hobby, it’s a lifestyle.”*

*Tobias Sandberg, Sweden Athlete*



# Key Performance Indicators

## 5. Sustained Increase in Revenues

Key Performance Indicator	Target	R	A	C	I
Property audit and valuation completed	2019 Q4	Board	President	Board	Board
Sponsor packages are established for sale	2020 Q2	Board	Board	World Rugby	Partners
Joint sponsor agreement reached with Rugby World Cup for IWRF Championship events	2020 Q3	Board	Board	World Rugby	Members
Develop new revenue sources to support increased organizational capacity including two additional staff	2022 Q2	Board	Board	Partners	Members
Grant opportunities are identified and applied for	2024 Q4	CEO Committees	Board	Partners	Members
Membership revenues maintained under new MRS	2024 Q4	CEO	Board	Members	Members

**“It’s indispensable, irreplaceable, like my partner. It is something I stake my life on.”**

**- Daisuke Ikezaki, Japan Athlete**



## 6. Increased Involvement with Wheelchair Rugby Variations

Key Performance Indicator	Target	R	A	C	I
Working contacts established with open wheelchair rugby community	2020 Q2	VWG	Board	Partners	Members
Working contacts established with wheelchair rugby sevens community	2020 Q2	VWG	Board	Partners	Members
Technical documents for open wheelchair rugby published	2021 Q1	Committees	CEO	Board	Members
Governance model for open wheelchair rugby developed	2022 Q1	VWG	Board	Partners	Members
Pathway to IWRF recognition of wheelchair rugby sevens developed	2022 Q2	VWG	Board	Partners	Members
Strategies for variations reviewed and updated	2022 Q4	Board	Board	Committees	Members
Paralympic status of current version of wheelchair rugby maintained in perpetuity	2024 Q4	Board	Board	Committees	Members

## 7. Step Change in Broadcast and Communication

Key Performance Indicator	Target	R	A	C	I
Communications Working Group (CWG) established	2019 Q3	CEO	Board	Members Partners	Members
CWG leader recruited and appointed	2019 Q3	CEO	Board	Board	Members
Broadcast and communication strategy developed	2020 Q2	CWG	Board	Members Partners	Members
Website and social media review completed	2020 Q4	CWG	Board	Committees	Members
Website and social media strategy implemented	2021 Q2	CWG	Board	Committees	Members
Broadcast and communication strategy implemented	2023 Q1	CEO	Board	Members Partners	Members



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