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# WWR Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024

## “Mid-term Review”

worldwheelchair.rugby

# WWR Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024 “Mid-term Review”

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# Executive summary.

In 2019, the Board and Working Group Heads developed an organisational strategic plan that would cover the period of 2019 to 2024. After meeting in person, the plan was finalised and published.

By the end of 2019 Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus was reported. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a public health emergency of international concern on the 30 January 2020 and a pandemic on 11 March 2020.

The organisational impact of a pandemic was significant. The first six months were mostly reactive, engaging with event organisers and working on a week by week basis assessing what it means to work and live during a pandemic. A significant amount of countries experienced the phenomenon of being locked down, with only essential services open to the public.

The next significant impact was the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games being postponed by one year. An unprecedented situation that was to have a direct knock-on effect for the next two years.

## 2020 and 2021, priorities and focus.

In April 2020, the Board appointed Steve Griffiths as its new CEO. His initial plan was to look at WWR's business and understand its challenges and develop clear actions that would ensure the organisation meets its strategic plans and KPI's. The CEO termed this "first 100 days" and five significant issues were identified:

1. Covid-19 and the postponement of the Paralympic Games.
2. Risk related to financial management.
3. Reputational risk related to WADA compliance.
4. Lack of administrative systems.
5. Ball sponsorship concludes by end of 2020.

Actions were taken to mitigate these immediate five issues and all of the above were dealt with such that any significant reputational or financial damage was removed.

Other issues were identified in areas such as governance, athlete welfare, World Rugby partnership, membership communication and lack of input to the Board from the Heads of Working Groups.

## 2022 World Championship.

The 2022 World Championship was scheduled for October and would be the first WWR event that had been planned and not postponed, two and a half years after the declaration of the pandemic.

This was the opportunity for the Board, Heads of Working Groups and new functional areas to come together in person for the first time in three years. Its key objective was to review the current strategic plan and ensure that there was a renewed focus on the next two years, 2023 and 2024.

### Strategic review objectives

- To review the organisational performance in relation to the 2019- 2024 Strategic Plan.
- To identify omissions and required amendments.
- To develop a 2023 Operational Plan.

The following document provides the agreed mission, vision and strategic goals.

- It highlights the key achievements of the last three years (2019 – 2022).
- It lists out the challenges and areas that have not been successful.

Importantly, three additional documents accompany this strategic review, which are separate and available on the website:

1. Strategic Review - Performance against KPIs for 2019 – 2022,
2. Strategic Review - 2023 2024 KPIs,
3. The original 2019 – 2024 strategic plan (available using previous brand).

# WWR President introduction

Welcome to this review of our current strategic plan which took place in Denmark alongside the World Championship (10 -16 October 2022). I want to congratulate our member organisation, Parasport Denmark who acted as the organising committee and delivered the best World Championship so far, building on the success of Sydney in 2018. What was obvious as well was the level of competition across all 12 teams, with many people that I spoke with noting improvements within the nations.

Thank you to all involved.

Why review the strategic plan now? There are several answers to this question. A mid-term review was always planned, travel restrictions have been reduced allowing more people to travel and the Championship in Denmark provided a useful hosting opportunity.

Additionally, WWR has evolved with a new Board comprising elected and appointed positions as well as the new functional areas, Coaching and the WWR Office. Meeting in person is the single biggest cost that WWR commits to and therefore it was important that this was planned and facilitated appropriately.

As an organisation, we continuously and historically have operated virtually but have always recognised the value of meeting people and interacting face-to-face. Whilst some individuals had offered their apologies, it was great to see the majority of the Board and Staff in the meeting room.

I'm using the term staff to provide a way of capturing the people who will be both delivering the operational plan as well as the leadership to our wider working groups, technical officials, classifiers, coaches, Regional General Managers etc. All of these staff positions are volunteers and their names are provided later in recognition of the phenomenal work that they do.

A large amount of the work that we are doing is to continue building the organisation so that it can be a more attractive proposition to sponsors. In terms of broadcasting, building this into the bid stage for our top-level Championship events, so that it is fully incorporated and understood right through to the delivery of the competition.

Two exciting outcomes for me were around the development of a coaching resource and focus on increasing female participation. WWR are aware that many Members need support in training coaches. This important role can underpin development at the national level including creating sustainable clubs that can attract new players.

Wheelchair Rugby since it's conception has always been a mixed sport of which I have always been proud of. However, not enough has been done to focus on how we can create opportunities to attract female athletes as well as aspiring leaders.

You will see a specific focus on these two important topic over the next two years.

Lastly, my thanks again to all involved who contribute and commit to the fantastic sport of wheelchair rugby.

Kind regards

Richard Allcroft  
WWR President

# 2019 - 2024 Strategic Plan

## Vision.

The 2019 - 2024 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:

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*World Leader in Para Sport*

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## Mission

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*Growing and supporting the wheelchair rugby family*

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## Strategic Goals

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 WWR.

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. Increased involvement with wheelchair rugby variations
6. Sustained increase in revenues
7. Step change in broadcast and communications

*The full and original 2019 – 2024 strategic plan is available on the website.*

# WWR key achievements

## 2019- 2024 Strategic Plan

A full breakdown against the organisational KPI's can be found on the website accompanying the link to this review document. The following captures the headline achievements under the title of the seven strategic goals.:

### 1. Strong leadership and effective governance

WWR Office an administrative service established (2020).

Organisational name change – World Wheelchair Rugby (2021).

Rebrand – new brand developed in partnership with a major Creative Marketing and Communications Agency (<https://www.cossette.com/en/home>) (2021).

New website created and published. (2021).

General Assembly hosted virtually. (2021).

Statute and bylaw review agreed by Member Nations (2021).

Membership and Licensing System (MALS) implemented (2020).

Board composition reviewed and agreed by Member Nations (2021).

Board Directors appointed based on specific skills in legal, risk and finance. Including independent director appointment. (2021).

World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) code compliant (2021).

Anti-Doping Rules updated and completed (2021).

Anti-Doping Education Plan created (2021).

Independent Judicial Chair appointed and draft code of conduct and disciplinary regulations produced. Ready for approval (2021).

### 2. Growth and development of wheelchair rugby

Coach and Education Working Group established. (2021)

Introductory coaching course created and delivered in Africa. (2021)

Coaching education delivered within Scandinavian Summer Camp (2022)

Chief Medical Officer appointed (2020).

Covid – 19 Return to Train and Play advisory guidelines implemented. (2021 including ongoing revisions).

Medical policies published on website (2020).

Covid-19 Medical Advisory Group created (2020).

Application for Los Angeles 2028 Paralympics submitted to IPC (2022).

Application for Melbourne 2026 Commonwealth Games submitted (noting – this was subsequently unsuccessful)

Licensing Regulations updated and more recording of Level 5 events (2021 and ongoing).

Championship events took place during pandemic requiring significant overview and Covid-19 mitigation plans.

Competition quadrennial required complete overhaul and redevelopment in reaction to Covid-19 (2020).

First-ever wheelchair rugby specific Medical Symposium hosted in partnership with Peter Harrison Centre (Loughborough University, UK). <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/phc/> (2021).

### 3. Technical excellence in Paralympic wheelchair rugby

Confirmed inclusion and funding support in Rugby World Cup, France 2023.

<https://www.rugbyworldcup.com/2023/news/675216/france-2023-a-rugby-world-cup-with-a-positive-impact>

New Classification Rules and classifier handbook published. (2021).

Implemented requirement for mandatory medical diagnostic information (new status athletes).

Implemented new impairment measurement system for athletes with limb deficiency. (2022).

Established new Technical Classifier role – first trainee attended World Championship

Classification research published.

Rule Change Regulation updated. (2021)

Release of the revised Rules, Casebook, Evaluator Manual, Referee Hand Signal Graphics and new Game Commissioner Manual. (2021)

WWR uniforms provided for all technical staff. (2021 – 2022)

Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games delivered under significant Covid-19 countermeasures (2021).

Three Regional General Manager's initially appointed with a fourth added later. (2021 & 2022)



#### 4. Strong partnership with World Rugby

Anti-Doping assistance – Delegated Testing contract under construction

Game Analysis – dedicated analyst

Commercial and broadcast function – introduction to Rugby World Cup (RWC) Partners

Support for International Wheelchair Rugby Cup (IWRC) at France 2023

WWR will be part of RWC 2027 and 2031

Support for Low Point Game at The World Games 2022

Technology Department – Purchase of the “.rugby” domain name

Annual Grant of GBP20k confirmed

Support for Commonwealth Games application

#### 5. Increased involvement with wheelchair rugby variations

Inclusion of Low Point Game and funding model provided for The World Games, Alabama, USA (July 2022)  
<https://www.theworldgames.org>

Wheelchair Rugby 5's incorporated into WWR's strategy. Rules published on website.

Explanatory text now included on website about newly developed disciplines such as Rugby 5's, Low Point Game, Invictus Games.

Variation Working Group completed and absorbed into Development Working Group (2020).

#### Challenges

The following two areas have been challenging and no significant progress has been made in these two important strategic objectives. The strategic review highlighted these and the Board are prioritising this for 2023 and 2024.

#### 6. Sustained increase in revenues

A sponsorship company were engaged that produced limited results.

Ball sponsor contract renegotiated with a small increase in financial support.

The Board are reviewing the CEO position, highlighting skill sets in developing strategic partnerships and delivering sustainable revenue streams.

## 7. Step change in broadcast and communications

WWR initiated a short term, digital first Broadcast initiative for the 2022 World Championship. Objectives were to:

- Establish a presence on WWR platforms that contained video content.
- Build interest with Global distributors (Network TV, Digital platforms).
- Develop a baseline for long term strategy.

The strategic review provided recommendations to the Board.

- WWR establishes broadcast standard.
- Greater oversight for WWR on the production.
- Enhanced “Turn Key” production for digital using on air / on screen talent (former athletes), athlete features, mix zone interviews
- Bundle properties together (2-4 years)
- Create legal templates
- Shift from competition to event working group that is inclusive of broadcast & content

## Activities Missing from current Strategic Plan

- Athlete welfare. Develop “Safe Sport” programme
- Develop strategies for increasing the number of women as participating athletes .
- Develop a diversity and inclusion policy (including Transgender)
- Bid documents for competitions to include and mention the importance of sustainability
- Develop strategies for educating members in relation to the Social Impact of Wheelchair Rugby

The activities above were identified as either missing or needing prioritising.

As highlighted previously a full breakdown of the KPI's is provided on the website to accompany this strategic review. This forms the operational plan for 2023 and will feature heavily in operational requirements in 2024.

# Acknowledgment

WWR is operated fundamentally by volunteers. These individuals whether they are elected, appointed or co-opted all have skills that they use to contribute to the sport. You can never identify all individuals involved and the following recognises those individuals who took part specifically in the strategic review in Denmark in October 2022.

## Board

Richard Allcroft	President
Ken Sowden	Vice President
Jen Braem	Director for finance and risk management affairs
Martin Richard	Board Director
Seong Sin Han	Director for legal and governance affairs (Independent)
Gail Hamamoto	Board Director

## Staff

Kathy Newman	Head of competitions and development
Cherie Harris	Head of development
Tim Johnson	Head of competitions
Darren Roberts	Head of technical
Greg Ungerer	Head of classification
Eron Main	Anti-doping manager
John Timms	Head of administration (WWR Office)
Adam Frost	Head of coaching
Steve Griffiths	Strategic review facilitator

Apologies – Steve Loader, Board Director, Jens Sauerbier, Board Athlete Representative and Ken Lee, Chief Medical Officer.

World Wheelchair Rugby is domiciled in Switzerland and regarded as an "Association" under Swiss law, with its address being:

World Wheelchair Rugby  
c/o World Academy of Sport  
Switzerland Sàrl,  
Route Suisse 8A, 1163 Etoy

[worldwheelchair.rugby](http://worldwheelchair.rugby)



WWR operates an administration service which is based in the UK.

Please contact WWR via email to arrange for the best contact person, should it be required.

WWR Office  
World Wheelchair Rugby  
4 Park Square, Newton Chambers Road,  
Sheffield, England S35 2PH  
Tel: +44 (0) 114 257 3170  
E-mail: [office@worldwheelchair.rugby](mailto:office@worldwheelchair.rugby)