



IRV Member Countries

Bern, 23/03/2021

**IRV World Championships 2021 in New Jersey, USA
Letter from the IRV Executive Board**

Dear friends of Wheel Gymnastics,
Dear Wheel Gymnastics representatives in IRV member countries,

It is with an extremely heavy heart that the voluntary IRV Executive Board has decided to cancel the postponed 2020 Wheel Gymnastics World Championships planned to be held in New Jersey in July 2021.

This is the toughest decision we have had to make in 25 years of IRV history.

The IRV team has held regular online meetings during the last few months to discuss the challenges and opportunities of the current pandemic, especially from the point of view of athletes and coaches, whose access to training varies enormously.

We have put a lot of thought into the purpose of holding World Championships in our sport. Being selected and representing a country at the World Championships is a one-time chance for many gymnasts, and competing against the best athletes in the world is a reward for many hours of hard training.

We are aware that our decision will be a disappointment for the local organisers as well as for the many prospective participants around the world. We are extremely sorry about this and have attempted to explain the background for our decision in the paragraphs below:

- Over the last year we have all been reminded that our health is one of the most important goods we have. Given the current situation of unpredictable new waves and outbreaks of COVID-19 in most countries, the IRV does not want to provide a platform that contributes to the mixing of people arriving from all over the world. Although we are certain that the organising committee would have taken all possible precautions to keep the risk of infection as low as possible, the last months have shown us that there is simply no guarantee.
- We have seen that the worldwide COVID-19 situation can change quickly. It is impossible to predict how the situation in IRV member countries will be in a few months from now. What happens if some countries have significantly higher positive rates than others and are not allowed to travel? Should only people who are vaccinated be allowed to take part in the World Championships? What if not everyone has access to vaccination? And what if people from some countries are not allowed to enter the USA by the time of our beloved event? If we add to this the labyrinth of quarantine rules and testing requirements (with associated expenses) in home countries, transit countries and the host country itself, we can only conclude that the current situation is still too unstable to plan a World Championship event that is fair and safe for everyone.

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- Training conditions in the IRV member countries are very different. While some gymnasts have been permitted to train almost without interruption, others have not been near a wheel for the last six months or even longer. In our opinion, the World Championships should be a high-level event in which every country has a fair chance to compete. This will not be the case in 2021. There is a danger that gymnasts who have not been able to train properly for the championships could be tempted to take high risks in competition and expose themselves to potentially serious injuries.
- Finally, there is the crucial question of responsibility and liability. As official organiser of the World Championships, the IRV is the primary liable institution for every official IRV event, while the local hosts are responsible for the implementation of the necessary parameters as described in the underlying Framework Conditions. This means that the IRV is not only responsible for ensuring fair and equal conditions for the gymnasts, coaches and judges - it also has ultimate responsibility for the safety and physical health of all the participants on site at the event. We have lived with COVID-19 long enough to know that however much is done to safeguard the participants, there will always be the risk of an infection with unpredictable consequences for the affected person/s and the IRV. Whether we like it or not, we cannot compare ourselves to major international sports federations such as FIFA, IOC, WTA, IAAF, NBA etc. We have neither the financial nor the legal means to cater for all eventualities and the level of risk is simply too high for the IRV to take responsibility for organising this event during the ongoing pandemic.

These are the most important reasons that led to this difficult decision and we ask for your understanding.

Reduced IRV fees for 2021

Due to the current situation, we have decided to reduce the IRV fees for 2021. Countries will be charged for membership only. No charge will be made for contributions based on the number of gymnasts at the previous World Championships. For some member countries, this will reduce their payment by 50% in 2021.

A brighter future for Wheel Gymnastics

Despite the negative impact COVID-19 has had on our plans for 2020 and 2021, it has also brought with it the recognition of new possibilities for the future:

- We started our [Online Competitions](#) at the end of last year to offer motivation for gymnasts, coaches and judges. This format has been well accepted and is more inclusive for those unable to travel. We will continue to organise these types of events in the future.
- We are also planning a virtual [Team Trophy in May 2021](#), at which all eligible countries are eager to compete.
- Our [Wheel Gymnastics Academy](#) is also progressing with digital content that can be made widely available to spread knowledge about our sport around the world.

All these measures show how the IRV is exploring the potential of digital formats for the future development of wheel gymnastics.



None of this takes away from the sad fact that we will miss out on our planned World Championships in 2021, but it provides some light at the end of the tunnel. With vaccination programmes underway around the world, we hope that international travel will resume by the end of this year and we look forward to seeing 3-dimensional wheels and gymnasts at IRV events as soon as it is feasible.

Best regards from the IRV Executive Board.

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IRV President

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