

EUR2 – Poland

LOC

Marcin Rudziński – Secretary General

Polish Floorball Federation position on WFCQ has not changed since December. We have already taken steps to organize the tournament at a safe and high level. Nevertheless, we cannot imagine a situation in which we will continue further preparations, bear the costs, and a few days before the tournament it will turn out that two, three or four teams will not come. In order for the WFCQ to make sense and, above all, not to "wash out" the organizer's budget, all registered teams must come.

The only topic that we are not sure of is the decision to extend and amend the C19 restrictions. The current restrictions are in force until the end of January and due to the chaotic actions of the Polish government, we have no idea what to expect in February. Even unofficially, we can't find out anything.

In conclusion, we as Polish Floorball Federation are ready to organize the WFCQ in February, because everyone who reported their readiness to participate in WFCQ in December should be aware of the risks that may arise nowadays, in a short period of time. The only thing that may prevent us from playing in Łochów is that the Polish government will close the borders. However, if we are going to play 4 teams, it doesn't make sense.

At this time, in the event that IFF decides to postpone the WFCQ, we are unlikely to be able to host the tournament at any other time.

At the same time, please let us know how we will receive the reimbursement of the costs already incurred in the organizational matters of the tournament.

Belgium

Rossana Mäder – Secretary General

Even though there is a lot of uncertainty during these times because of Covid-19, including many obstacles from logistical and practical point of view (some of our new equipment is stuck in China, our flights back home from Warsaw to Brussels got cancelled earlier today, etc.), we will try everything it takes to participate in the WFCQ in Poland.

France

Zuzana Kandrikova – Team Manager

We have engaged ourselves in coming to the qualifications. It demanded a huge physical effort for two years, mental involvement and administrative preparation - from the side of the national federations as well as for the local organizers of the qualifications. We are in the group EUR2 and our Polish organizer said that he had no possibility to organize it in some later dates.

Postponing the qualifications asks questions about the future of floorball, about the players in the national team. We all have already purchased our flight tickets, we partially paid for the accommodation and food; everybody booked their holidays at work or arranged their classes at school in order to come. It might happen that the team will lose some players if we postpone the qualifications. Not because they are demotivated but for financial reasons and because of not having any more holidays at work. And what about our national federation? Will it survive paying all

these expenses and investing again in May? I can't say, but as a small floorball nation it's an alarming situation we would get into.

The virus has been among us for almost two years now. A lot of sports have found a way to continue. We can't compare to the financial power of these federations but look, there is:

- Handball European Championship going on right now in Hungary and Slovakia. Arenas are full so far and we can't say that handball involves fewer physical contacts than floorball in the field.
- African Football Cup
- Australian Open of Tennis

Can't we try to adapt to the restrictions rather than pushing the problems for later? Last year, the women's qualifications were postponed to May as well and what was the result? The situation didn't change and they were cancelled generating a situation where teams were qualified by their ranking instead of their actual results on the field.

All we want is to **play the sport we love.**

We are all vaccinated (most of us with three doses), we will get tested before coming to Poland and we're precautionous. Despite of that we can catch the virus - here or there, in bus, at work, at the shopping center, at the restaurant, at the family meeting. Here in France or there in Poland. We don't want to get penalized because we decided to make sport and continue to do so also during this difficult sanitary period.

If the price for playing is to make it without an audience, we're willing to pay it. Even though the atmosphere won't be the same and the arenas will be sadly silent, all we want is to play the sport we love.

Specifically for EUR2 - I know there might be some governmental decisions on the 31st of January in Poland. This is up to our local Polish organizer to inform us as much in advance as possible if the rules change. I believe they do their best to find out the proper information. For sure if it becomes practically impossible for countries to come (for example in case that on the 31st of January the government rules will ask from every person entering the country to have been in quarantine for 10 days) we might be forced to postpone but so far we managed to match the required regulations.

I really hope that we will be able to hold these qualifications at the original dates scheduled. This is the point of view of the whole French national team staff and it is supported by the French national federation. Wishing that we'll find the best solution.

Hungary

András Pafféri– Head Coach

According to the news and the expected restrictions it seems that the next few weeks (4-6) will be worse and worse because of the increasing infections of Omicron. It means the risk of the infection is high.

The real risk is what if the players or the staff get infected right before or during the competition. If it happens all the time and money which was invested from our players and the staff would be wasted!

We do not know what will be the situation in May but to consider the risk now and what we can get or lose it is totally logical to postpone the competition to May.

Here in Hungary the situation of the floorball sport is really hard and it is a really big effort to build and organize everything for the National team from the staff and from every each of the players! If such a big risk is in the picture which can destroy the full experience of a big event then it is not a question what is the good solution. All the groups can play in the same time, there is no chance to calculate with the results, all the team will have the equal opportunity to play if we postpone the tournaments.

So our position is right now it's better to postpone all the qualification tournaments to a later day, which should be the same date for all the EUR groups!

If all the other teams are on the GO side for February outside of us, we can go somehow but it is much more supported to postpone to May or any other day before summer.

Liechtenstein

Franz Maurer – Team Manager

From today's point of view Liechtenstein will still participate in the first week of February as long as there is no quarantine on entry. Liechtenstein has basically a small squad, which means we only have 5 emergency players. If more than 5 players are positive (absent) immediately before departure, then Liechtenstein will most likely have to cancel at short notice.

Nevertheless, the best option for Liechtenstein would be if the tournament takes place as planned. If the tournament is postponed, we have to clarify if our players can take vacations for the postponed date. As soon as a postponement date is fixed, we will make these clarifications. In this case there is also the possibility that Liechtenstein cannot participate in the WFCQ 2022.

It would be an advantage if the IFF Central Board has made the decision whether the tournament will take place as planned or will be postponed until next Monday. This is especially in view of the fact that we can still cancel our flight tickets free of charge until Monday evening.

Thank you for making a quick decision.

Norway

Lars Buaes – Head of National Teams

The Norwegian Floorball Association has concerns for the upcoming WFCQ, and in our opinion, the WFCQ should be postponed or cancelled, due to the current infection situation and concerns.

Here are some of our concerns:

- Infected national team players / staff before departure
- Mandatory 10 days of quarantine in Poland with positive test or close encounter, which will have consequences for putting through the national league matches in the same period.
- The national team could also bring infection to the national league, which again will cause challenges in putting through national league matches.

Since the middle of December, the Norwegian Floorball Association has had major practical and administrative challenges with putting through our highest league (Eliteserien), which is per date the only league that is currently allowed to play matches.

Russia

Maksim Chernov - President

Unfortunately for all of us, the situation with COVID-19 is rapidly deteriorating both in Russia and in Europe so from our point of view, the postponement of qualifications is the most optimal and safe option.

Sweden

Jan Lindberg – Head of National Teams

The infection rate in Sweden, and in the rest of Europe is higher than ever. In Sweden, the spread of infection is expected to reach its peak at the end of January.

As the risk of outbreaks in the teams is great based on the current situation and the teams sizes are smaller than usual, it can lead to sporting injustice and in the worst case, impossibility to complete the qualifying games.

Our association are struggling with sick players and postponed games and we can, in the worst case, find it difficult to finish the season within the stipulated time.

We have invested time and money in this, but for us, the health of players and leaders will always come first. Therefore, the Swedish Floorball Federation proposes that the World Cup qualifiers be moved to May, so that the qualifiers can be played under as fair and safe conditions as possible. In addition, one of the qualifying groups has already been moved, it would be sportingly fair if all groups were played at the same time.

If, despite the situation, it is decided to implement the WFCQ, it needs to be extremely clear what happens if one or more people are tested positive on the spot. What is the plan? Quarantine? Opportunities to go home? And how does the organizer ensure that everything from accommodation, travel and games is carried out as safely as possible?

EUR3 - Italy

LOC

Jorgen Olshov – Secretary General

We fully understand the worries regarding the event as numbers are again increasing all over Europe. We have discussed the matter internally as well as with the venue owner, Bella Italia EFA Village. Despite the difficult period we believe there are a number of positive conditions in favour of holding the event.

- The vaccination campaign is going forward at full speed in Italy
- Almost 90% of the population over 12 years old has been vaccinated
- Almost 50% has also taken the booster (third dose)

This does of course not provide any guarantee of not having cases, but at least the risk is reduced. Italy has had a number of restrictions in place since a very long time, e.g. use of face mask, so there is a very high level of awareness on how to reduce risks.

At Bella Italia EFA Village we will run the event according to a "bubble" concept during the tournament, hence the teams will not leave Bella Italia EFA Village during the whole event. In addition, meals will be arranged so that each team will have their own table for exclusive use during the whole tournament. Meals will be had according to a predefined schedule in order to further reduce the risk. Bella Italia has hosted a number of sports events during this period so the staff is very well prepared.

Travelling to get to the event is of course a moment of risk. It should however be noted that 6 out of 8 teams will travel to Lignano Sabbiadoro by private transport, only two teams (Spain and Cote d'Ivoire) will travel by flight.

It should also be noted that at the time being we do not have any alternative dates available for hosting the event in April-June.

Based upon these considerations we would recommend to confirm the event according to the planned schedule

Austria

Timmo Taurer – Vice President

We told and explained you exact this problem since November 2021, and you **never** listened to us! You postponed one out of three WFCQs, which is by the way a competitive distortion for the earlier playing WFCQs! Why? Because of your new strange foreign player system/rule and of course for every team battling for the fourth place.

Short explanation: Teams which can play 4 month later have the possibility to find extra players from other countries for their team. This because of your funny new rule that a player can play for a national team without a passport, by only parents, grandfather/mother etc. need to have the nationality. And not to forget, every team battling for the fourth place. If 8 teams can play 4 month later, they know exactly the results from the already played WFCQs and can adapt and change their playing style/tactics in referring to goal differences.

Our suggestions will be to postpone the WFCQ to the same date as the WFCQ in Latvia. **A complete cancellation is NOT fair and not an option for us!** In this case we will lose all possibilities to qualify on an athletically way and also all the money the federation and the players had to invest the last years. In Austria we are in the not in the lucky situation, that the players getting paid and all of them need to sacrifice a lot of their holidays and money! We are talking there about more than 2000€ for each player in a 2 year preperation for a WFCQ.

The only possible solutions for the Austrian Floorball Federation are:

- Playing the WFCQ as planned from 02.02.2022-05.02.2022
- Postpone to May same as the WFCQ in Latvia

A Cancellation now or any other date is NO option!

Côte d'Ivoire

Marcel Wadja - President

Regarding the situation in Côte d'Ivoire, we all have already paid our flight tickets for the whole delegation. We received only before yesterday the bills for accommodation and food, the first payment of which must be made today 14.01.22. We only have to apply for a visa for Italy.

We are all vaccinated and we will get tested before coming to Italy. Everybody booked their holidays at work and we have already received the authorization of the different schools for the players in order to come. It might happen that the team will lose some players and staff if we postpone the qualifications.

Czech Republic

Zuzana Svobodova – Head of National Teams

When sending in our first nomination, no rules regarding vaccination were officially in place. Couple of days later, the rule came, we accepted it and were ready to come with vaccinated players and staffers only.

However, shall the rule of 6 month validity of the covid pass be in place, there are only 10+3 players out of our initial list of 27 players who would be able to participate. In such a case, we are not ready to participate even if we shall be allowed to find some more replacement players with a valid certificate. A national team is not supposed to be a team of those who are eligible to play according to the rules of a certain country but the chosen/best players a country wants to have in the team. There are not that many days in the season a national team can have an event, in a year in which a WFC is just 10 month away, any day together counts and it makes no sense to invest money/time in a team which is only remotely resembling the original one.

At the same time, the current quarantine rules in the Czech republic will most likely from Monday January 17 on be the way, that any person being positive or having met a positive person, needs to be in 5 days quarantine - no matter if unvaccinated, vaccinated or recovered. This will most likely gradually affect many people and even repeatedly as there is mandatory testing twice a week of all school kids as well as all the working population already in place.

This may also affect our participation and availability of the players/staffers for the tournament.

Considering all these facts and a lot of uncertainty around, we would like to have the qualification postponed to a later term.

Germany

Martin Brückner – Team Manager

Thanks for your mail and the chance to give a statement. We have some thoughts about that topic:

We also follow the situation right now with concern. Since the incidence is rising rapidly in many participating countries and the hosting country Italy, we are afraid for following topics

- First of all the health of our players, staff members and so on. Fortunately, all are fully vaccinated and many are boosted.
- Can we get enough players to the WFCQ since couple of Bundesligateams have now Corona cases and it is predicated that the incidence in Germany will rise a lot in coming weeks
- How can we manage quarantine in Italy for players or staff members (costs, hotel, transport back to Germany etc.)

However, we would try our best to organize everything so that we can participate at the WFCQ in Italy in February. We see a big problem in postponing the event. Following reasons:

- The Bundesliga will be played until end of June. The long season was planned by purpose since we were expecting that games can't be played or that we have to interrupt the season for a while. After breaking up the Bundesliga for 2 years it is crucial to finish the season this time.
- If the WFCQ would be held in May (how it is planned for the Latvia group) the time to the WFC gets really tight for all organizational processes.

Of course there are also information missing to have an even more clear picture of the situation. The decision should from our point of view made by the question how safety the tournament can be.

- Is it in Italy some kind of a bubble where we live in?
- If all teams do PCR tests just before the tournament (for example with a quick PCR-test?) and we can manage a bubble the importance of the local incidence is not anymore that important.

These are our thoughts about the whole situation.

Slovakia

Martin Kopejtko - President

According to the fact that pandemic situation is getting worse again and not only in Europe, but all around the world, Slovak Floorball Association recommends to postpone WFCQ to May 2022. Pandemic restriction set for this event can influence sport results a lot. Every participant wants to be presented with the best players and the restriction, that only vaccinated and people with recovery certificate can participate in this event can negatively impact.

Slovenia

Gorazd Tomc – Head Coach

For the time being, the Slovenian national team has no organizational problems due to Covid and is ready to participate in the qualifications in Italy from 2 February 2022 to 5 February 2022.

We also agree at some points with the opinion of the Austrian national team regarding the extra players. Due to the similar situation in Slovenian floorball like in Austrian and because our players also have to pay certain costs by themselves, we do not agree that the qualifications would not be carried out.

So, we would primarily like the qualifications to take place from 2.2. to 5.2.2022. If this is not feasible, they should be played in the same time as the qualifiers in Latvia. By no means do we agree to cancel the qualifications.

Spain

Floorball Spain

Our position remains the same that we have expressed from the beginning. We have always considered that the most logical thing was to postpone the events until April-May. The difficulties inherent to the COVID situation have been increasing week after week, and will continue to do so at least in the next few weeks.

In our particular case, and we believe that this also affects several countries, we have not being able to even train in normal conditions, either due to restrictions or absences due to quarantines, and we are still like that. Apart from that, the conditions of travel, entry and return to the countries are changing from one week to another; including administrative requirements regarding vaccination certificates. This is also challenging our lists of available players and staff.

It is not fair, in terms of competition, that a tournament is played on one date and other on another dates when they have common implications.

We also consider very unfair that the decision is being left to the countries, knowing the situation of enormous difficulty that we are fighting with. Leaving this decision to the countries, with enormous future consequences for the internal development of floorball at the national level, and ask them to decide if participate or not, in conditions that are far from being minimally adequate is totally unacceptable for us.

In a way it seems that we are being “forced” to say “yes we go” and in that case we will “play and not compete” and with uncertain consequences for our future (economical and organizational). Or if we say “no we cannot go” this will represent being out of any chance to qualify. Both decisions, if we have to make them ourselves, can have very devastating consequences for us at the national level.

We insist that IFF should postpone the event.

Just list some “very possible and real situations” (that are happening):

- Players and staff will get positive during these three weeks in January...
- Players and staff test positive just 24/48 hours prior to leave and obviously are not able to fly. What could we do then? (just simply imagine this happens to goalies, coaches, medical staff...)

- Is this a kind of event the one we want to have? – Isolated in rooms, not possible to go out, living like in a cage for the four/five days. What kind of experience are we offering to our teams/players/supporters? Don't we think that this will really have a negative impact on them and probably quit from floorball?
- WFCQ would not be not just go to the airport, arrive and lock in your room, not have the minimum possibility to share or talk with others, play (not compete), back to your room... This is not the event we need to offer to our teams. Do not forget that this is the one and only opportunity for many of us to see and live this kind of "events".
- If conditions are constantly changing (now with the six month last shot in the vaccine document). How are we preparing our teams and lists...?

We honestly think this will not be never a "floorball competition" if it goes; maybe some "floorball games" but never a fair competition.

SUMMARY

EUR2

Play	Postpone
Belgium	Hungary
France	Norway
Liechtenstein	Russia
Poland	Sweden

EUR3

Play	Postpone
Côte d'Ivoire	Austria
Italy	Czech Republic
Germany	Slovakia
Slovenia	Spain