



2020-2021

# ANNUAL REPORT



**INTERNATIONAL RINGETTE FEDERATION (IRF)**

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## Introduction

This is the first annual report given for the International Ringette Federation (IRF) Annual General Meeting since I have been President, 2019. This will be continued for future Annual General Meetings.

The IRF is the world governing body for ringette and is responsible for organizing and presenting the World Ringette Championships. This event is traditionally shared by Ringette Canada, Ringette Finland and Ringette Sweden. We are hoping that in future other members will be stepping forward to host this event. The IRF is responsible, along with its current members, for growing ringette. This is definitely a challenge taking into consideration financial constraints the IRF has.

The IRF consists of a Board, with three Full Members, Ringette Canada, Ringette Finland and Ringette Sweden. These full members are the voting members. The IRF also has Associate Members, Ringette USA, Ringette Czech Republic and Ringette Slovakia. The Associate Members are not voting members.

We hope that through this collaborative approach, we can promote ringette globally for future generations to enjoy.

*Jane Carson*  
President



## The IRF Council 2020-2021

President

Vice President

Communications Director

Technical Director

Sport Development Director

Jane Casson

Anniina Tuomola

Saara Lahti

Veera Lempiäinen

Christopher Kelly



The Council is responsible for the operations of the IRF and takes its direction from the Board. The IRF has no paid employees at this time and the Council does the work of the IRF as volunteers.

Board meetings are pre-scheduled for the third Thursday in the months of January, April, June, September and November. The Congress meeting has been held every two years in conjunction with the WRC. The last Congress meeting was held at WRC 2019, Burnaby, British Columbia. Going forward, such meetings will instead take the format of Annual General Meeting (AGMs). The first AGM was held in December 2021.

Council meetings take place every month except July on a date and time available to the Council members.

Finances are limited with the revenue sources coming from an annual registration fee, annual fees levied to Full Members based on athlete registration numbers and profit sharing from the World Ringette Championships. The main expense for the IRF is the WRC every two years.

## Covid-19



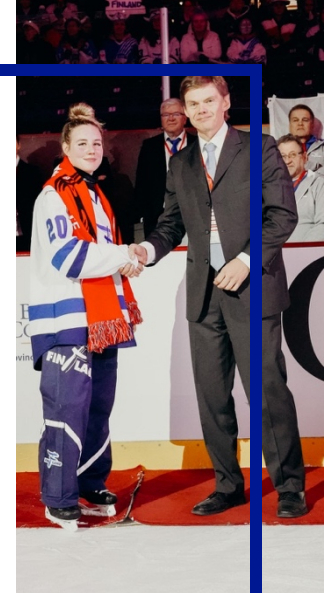
The WRC 2019 finished in December 2019. In March of 2020, lockdowns took place around the world and ringette was not played anywhere. The Board made a decision that the World Ringette Championships 2021 would be postponed until 2022. Finland was still in a position to host and dates were discussed and set for October 30, 2022 to November 6, 2022.

Covid-19 had an impact on the IRF revenues mainly due to the postponement of the WRC to 2022. We do not anticipate this will be an ongoing problem but continue to monitor the situation carefully.

# Ad Hoc Committees

## Competition Format Review Committee

Chair	Jane Casson
IRF Vice President	Anniina Tuomola
IRF Technical Director	Veera Lempiäinen
Ringette Canada	Frances Losier
Ringette Finland	Matti Virtanen
Ringette USA	Phyllis Sadoway
Ringette Sweden	Rachelle Graham



A recommendation was made to the Board after consultations with our members, athletes, and coaches which was accepted by the Board to move into a two-game format final in the Sam Jacks and Junior Pools (current two-team Pools). In Pools of three or more teams there will be round robin play.

## Competition Cycle Review Committee

Chair	Jane Casson
Ringette Canada	Frances Losier
Ringette Finland	Matti Virtanen
Ringette Sweden	Anna Norrbom

This Committee was tasked to review and make a recommendation for the continuing WRC cycle every two years after 2022: to continue in even years or odd years. After consultations with the members a recommendation was made and accepted by the Board to continue in odd years. This means IRF events after 2022 (starting from 2023) will move onto the odd year cycle. This is an ongoing process at the time of this report and initial discussions on the 2023 event planning have begun.

# Strategic Plan Review

## Values

### 1. ACCOUNTABILITY

During the last two years we have made IRF operations more transparent for the members and for the ringette world. This can be seen, for example, in the creation of a Google Drive cloud storage and increased social media activity. We have also openly discussed our recent registration as an association in Finland and shared updates on the situation regarding the Covid-19 pandemic across members. In addition, our work as the IRF Council has been consistent and impartial.

### 2. COLLABORATION

We have increased the amount of cooperation and collaboration in decision-making between member countries by setting up Ad Hoc Committees, to tackle different issues. An example of this would be the work of athletes and coaches regarding the Competition Format Committee.

### 3. EXCELLENCE

IRF has striven for excellence with our available resources in pandemic times. However, there is room for improvement in sharing best practices to promote continuity of effective operations.

### 4. INCLUSION

The Game Format Change Ad Hoc Committee, where we used the opinions and views of the different stakeholders in the ringette community as a basis for decision-making, is a good example of embodying inclusion. There is also room for improvement regarding inclusion of the developing member states (Czech Republic, Slovakia, and USA) in the decision-making process.

# Aims and objectives

## 1. World Ringette Championships

The following have contributed to this objective in our decision-making over the past two years:

- Choosing a game format that supports the objectives (webcast and broadcast as a chance for partners to benefit financially, marketing to provide the best ringette product to as many fans as possible)
- Postponement of the WRC due to Covid-19 pandemic (in order to provide a safe event environment)
- Updating Hosting Guidelines
- Collecting and sharing best practices between previous and upcoming WRC hosts
- Updating the IRF Playing Rules

## 2. Communications

We have made great progress in this area. We now have a regular presence on social media, a new website, and a professional email system. In addition, we have also improved the process of IRF's meetings: we have pre-scheduled Council meetings, Board meetings, and the AGM which have been promptly communicated to meeting participants. There is still a lot of branding work to be done in the future. Please see a more detailed review of Communications from page 9.

## 3. Sport Development

The Covid-19 pandemic is the main factor slowing down and preventing progress towards this objective. We have not been able to hold clinics or training camps for developing ringette countries. In addition, sport-related restrictions have had a negative impact on the number of ringette players everywhere. Promotional videos have been made but it seems that they have not yet achieved a significant increase in visibility.



## Action Plan 2020

Develop a Communication Plan and Brand Guidelines	Completed 2020
Develop an annual Sport Development Plan	Completed 2020
Share best practices between past and upcoming WRC Hosts	Completed 2021
Updating Hosting Guidelines for WRC	Completed 2021
Ringette Ambassador Programme	Postponed
Review IRF Playing Rules	To be completed by January 2022

## Action Plan 2021

Constitution amendments according to agreed good governance principles	To be completed by January 2022
Publishing an Annual Report	Completed
Registration of the IRF as an association in Finland	In progress
Policy development <sup>1</sup>	In progress

<sup>1</sup> The policy list is available in full on the IRF website at [www.irfringette.com](http://www.irfringette.com).

## Communications

The IRF communications have external and internal functions including website and social media platforms. The work to build stronger social media presence has continued with the introduction of the IRF Communication Plan, IRF Brand Guidelines as well as the branding of international ringette as 'fast fun family'. This threefold approach underpins the external communications of the IRF, with social media posting highlighting ringette's brand attributes: content promoting ringette, sharing stories from ringette communities around the world and in IRF original brand content. A promotional video that highlights these attributes was released in April 2021 after which the 'World of Ringette' playlist on YouTube was launched to highlight on and off the ice stories. At this point the messaging on IRF social media channels also was updated to include the tagline 'Welcome to the World of #ringette'. With sport engagement globally now alternating between live events and online, we need to ensure our messaging is consistent and fit for purpose. The IRF brand communications need to move from a broadcast media approach (broadcasting *to* someone) to more interactive (interacting *with* someone) to allow people to forge connections with the brand of ringette. We need to materialize ideas into concrete actions. A variety of methods is used in IRF communications, including:

- Website, with content such as news about Board decisions, appointments, developments, member associations
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn)
- Photo Galleries (Google Drive & Flickr)
- Landing page (Linktree)



## Website

The IRF contracted a web designer to create a completely new website for the IRF. The new site was launched on January 24, 2021 with the new domain of [www.irfringette.com](http://www.irfringette.com). The change of domain and website name meant that all IRF communication channels (apart from YouTube<sup>2</sup>) were made uniform under the @irfringette handle. The decision to launch a new website also meant that the IRF needed to find a new email host. The new @irfringette.com emails by Zoho Mail were concurrently introduced with the new website.

### Website statistics<sup>3</sup>

Visits to website <sup>4</sup>	1500
Page views <sup>5</sup>	3500

### Website visits by country

Top 5
1. Canada
2. Finland
3. United States
4. United Kingdom
5. Sweden



<sup>2</sup> YouTube channel requires 100 or more subscribers for a custom URL ending (i.e. YouTube.com/irfringette)

<sup>3</sup> Data from Squarespace Analytics January 1, 2020 to December 1, 2021

<sup>4</sup> Top device to visit website was desktop. Top source for visit was: Google, direct and Facebook. Top search keywords were: 'what is ringette'.

<sup>5</sup> Total number of views across all pages. Most visited page was 'Home'. Most visited news article was 'Finland to host 2021 World Ringette Championships'. Most time was spent on 'Events' page.

## Social Media Platforms<sup>6</sup>

<b>Facebook</b>	The IRF Facebook page ( <a href="http://www.facebook.com/irfringette">www.facebook.com/irfringette</a> ) is updated with IRF news, videos and photos. In addition to the IRF Facebook page, the IRF Events (WRC) have their own pages that are updated by the local organisers of the respective events.	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/irfringette">@irfringette</a>  2175 Page likes 2271 followers
<b>Instagram</b>	The IRF Instagram ( <a href="http://www.instagram.com/irfringette">www.instagram.com/irfringette</a> ) is updated with selected IRF news, event photos and videos as well as reposting of ringette related photos and videos. In addition to IRF Instagram, WRC has their own Instagram channel where to post event related photos and videos.	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/irfringette">@irfringette</a>  1883 followers
<b>Twitter</b>	The IRF Twitter ( <a href="http://www.twitter.com/irfringette">www.twitter.com/irfringette</a> ) shares IRF news, ringette tweets, videos and photos. WRC has Twitter for the respective event, which is utilizing a specific event hashtag when posting results (such as #WRC2019), news and other material related to the event.	<a href="https://www.twitter.com/irfringette">@irfringette</a>  769 followers
<b>YouTube</b>	The IRF YouTube channel ( <a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2-7X6UiEBR7fW1BA95LR1w">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2-7X6UiEBR7fW1BA95LR1w</a> ) features the World of Ringette: highlights, stories on the ice and behind the scenes.	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2-7X6UiEBR7fW1BA95LR1w">IRF Youtube</a>  21 subscribers
<b>LinkedIn</b>	The IRF LinkedIn Page ( <a href="http://www.linkedin.com/company/irfringette">www.linkedin.com/company/irfringette</a> ) was created in April 2021 to establish a business presence on social media. So far we have advertised vacant Council positions on LinkedIn.	<a href="http://www.linkedin.com/company/irfringette">International Ringette Federation (IRF)</a>  14 followers

<sup>6</sup> As at December 12, 2021.

## Social media metrics

Social media metrics include IRF Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn accounts.

Total engagements <sup>7</sup>	2165
Engagement rate (per impression) <sup>8</sup>	2.1%
Total impressions <sup>9</sup>	101 699

## Instagram<sup>10</sup> and Facebook<sup>11</sup> metrics<sup>12</sup>

Top 5	Instagram Followers	Facebook Page Likes
1	Canada	
2	Finland	
3	Sweden	
4	United States	
5	Slovakia	



<sup>7</sup> The number of times that users engaged with our posts during the reporting period across all platforms

<sup>8</sup> The number of times during the reporting period that users engaged with our posts as a percentage of impressions

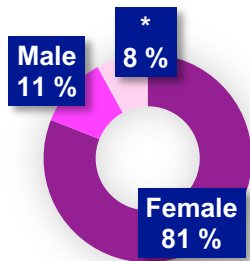
<sup>9</sup> The number of times that our content was displayed to users across all platforms

<sup>10</sup> Data from Not Just Analytics December 1, 2021

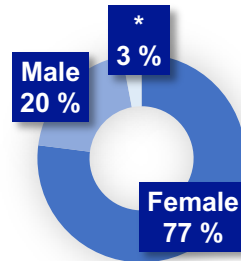
<sup>11</sup> Data from Sprout Social December 1, 2021

<sup>12</sup> People following the account

### Instagram audience by gender

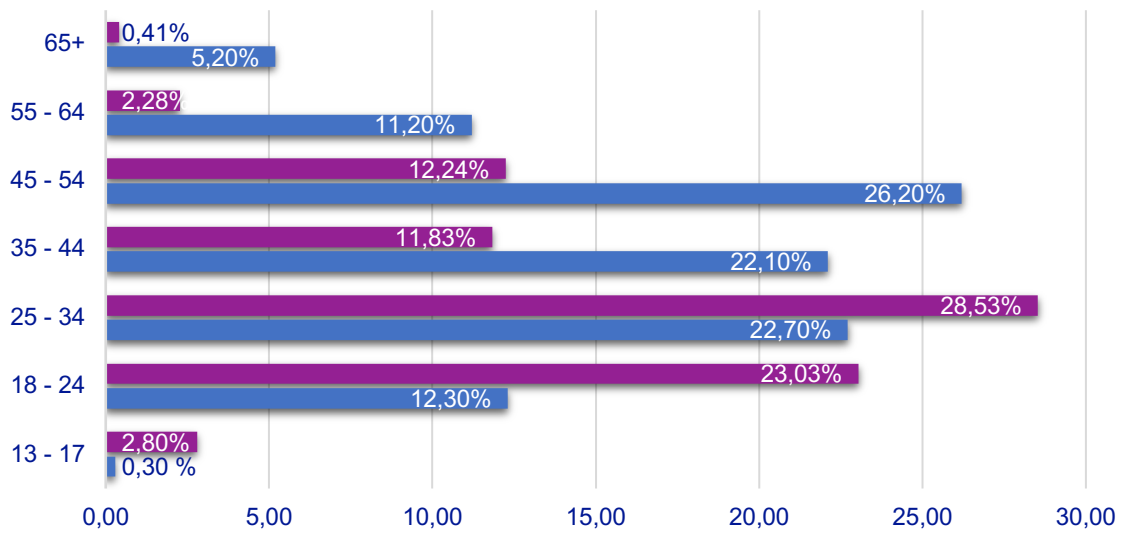


### Facebook audience by gender



13

### Instagram and Facebook audience by age



<sup>13</sup> \* stands for not defined (Not Just Analytics) or unspecified / non-binary (Sprout Social)



## Sport Development

There is very little to report in 2020-2021 due to the continued Covid-19 restrictions in place around the world. As the second, third and eventual fourth waves occurred at varying times in North America and Europe, ringette sport development was largely limited by various national and regional health concerns.

One positive development was on-going communication with Ringette Sweden to share coaching development material. With the assistance and guidance of Ringette Canada, permission was eventually received from the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) to share their ringette coach development material with Ringette Sweden. Initially it had been hoped that the IRF could facilitate an online delivery of this material. Due to a delayed roll out, this was not possible in August/September, however the IRF is confident that with Ringette Sweden's continued interest, that these programs can be shared in 2022. The IRF Sport Development Director Christopher Kelly is both a course facilitator and evaluator for this material and would be receptive to the possibility of traveling to Sweden immediately prior to the WRC and facilitating the delivery of this material to their coaches.



## Officials / Technical

Due to Covid-19 all development projects and clinics for officials were postponed until a later date. During 2021 the IRF Playing Rules were reviewed and updated by the IRF Technical Committee. The IRF Playing Rules Development Policy was created to ensure that the Playing Rules of ringette are reviewed regularly, distributed internationally, and used to help foster the development of ringette and its participants. The IRF Playing Rules shall be published in its entirety every four years. Proposal of the IRF Playing Rules Changes is made by the IRF Technical Committee.

### IRF Technical Committee

Chair  
Ringette Canada  
Ringette Finland

Veera Lempiäinen  
Kelsey McIntosh  
Matti Virtanen





## Concluding Remarks

The International Ringette Federation was formed as the World Ringette Council in 1986, known as the International Ringette Federation from 1991. Since 1990 the World Ringette Championships have been held every two to four years. Junior World Championship tournament was added in 2009. The Sam Jacks Pool consists of Ringette Canada Senior and Ringette Finland Senior teams. The President's Pool consists of Ringette Sweden, Ringette Czech Republic, Ringette USA and Ringette Slovakia.

These past two years have been difficult for us due to the pandemic. The fact that the Covid-19 situation has changed sometimes rapidly in different member nations meant that some nations were able to continue staging competitions while some had to stop all activities and are still not back on the ice.

Our organization runs on volunteer power and the Council is made up of five volunteers who dedicate long hours to the IRF. Their dedication and passion for Ringette is greatly appreciated by all members. Two of our Council members will be leaving in December 2021, Anniina Tuomola and Saara Lahti. They will be greatly missed by the remaining Council members. Thank you to the members of the IRF Board for their patience and direction.

*Jane Carson*  
President

