

MINUTES
Court of Handball
Video Meeting

DETAILS

Date: 20 March 2020

Time: 10:00 – 13:30hrs

PARTICIPANTS

EHF Court of Handball

Panos Antoniou	President
Kristian Johansen	Vice President
Elena Borrás Alcaraz	Member
Yvonne Leuthold	Member
Urmo Sitsi	Member
Libena Sramkova	Member

EHF

Monika Flixeder	Legal Management
Mihaly Kovacs	Legal Management
Sophia Touiker	Legal Management
Justine Daussy	Legal Management

Excused

Ioannis Karanasos	Member
Viktor Konopliastyi	Member

MINUTES

1. Welcome

President Antoniou welcomed all the members who were able to participate *via* videoconference despite the special circumstances due to COVID-19. He thanked all the members for their cooperation during the year and underlined the efficiency, independence and fairness of the Court of Handball (CoH).

President Antoniou made a point of specifically thanking Kristian Johansen for his cooperation during the EURO 2020. Indeed, thirty-two cases occurred and Panos and Kristian were nominated for each case.

President Antoniou also made a special acknowledgment to Sophia for her commitment during the EURO 2020.

2. Minutes of silence to pay homage to Henk Lenaerts

A minute of silence was held in memory of Henk Lenaerts. President Antoniou gave each participant the opportunity to tell something in the memory of Henk.

3. Short review of the EHF Court of Handball current season activities

As the Legal Delegation did not take place this year, the only meeting to summarize was the meeting of the Court of Appeal. The EHF informed on the CoA conclusion about the low amounts of the sanctions. Indeed, during the CoA meeting, the members mentioned the fact that the punishment

used by the Court of Handball rarely meets the limits provided in the Legal Regulations and that conditional punishments are frequently granted by the CoH.

President Antoniou underlines that the role of the CoH is not to take money from the national federations. Furthermore, according to President Antoniou there cannot be a big difference regarding the amount of sanctions between two EURO competitions, this augmentation needs to be gradual. The members also agree on the fact that for some federations 1.000 Euro is not much while for some federations it is a lot of money. All the federations do not have the same budget and this fact needs to be taken in consideration when rendering a decision.

The members also question themselves about the repetition of the infringement and the automaticity of doubling the sanction.

4. Initiation of Legal Proceedings

There is a case opened about undue influence on referees and the case was opened by the Initiator of proceedings. This topic is not further developed because it is closely linked to a current open case about undue influence of referees and President Antoniou do not want to risk influencing the panel members.

In general it is emphasized as a target for the future to further elaborate the role of the initiator of proceedings.

The EHF Court of Handball is in favour of separation the responsibilities on administrative level into the one regarding investigation and the handling of the proceedings themselves if possible. Currently such separation can be implemented in a feasible way.

5. Disciplinary cases

President Antoniou questions the members about the appropriate punishment for the officials: according to him, exclusion is not a solution because it has only a limited impact. It should be financial sanctions in order to really influence the officials. However each case needs to be judged individually depending on the situation. In addition prejudices needs to be taken into consideration to a certain extent.

6. Anti-Doping

Based on the decisions on preliminary suspension of the Romanian Anti-Doping authority respectively the Romanian federation, decisions on the recognition of such decisions were taken on EHF level. Despite the active and accurate handling of the proceedings upon initiation of the respective proceedings, no further information on measures were received neither by the Romanian Anti-Doping authority nor by the Romanian federation until now. The cases mentioned related to institutional doping as the entire team was concerned and the doctor of the team organized a kind of blood doping for all team members. The further proceedings of the Romanian Anti-doping authority/federation are pending and the EHF relates further decision to their actions. The National federation's decision should be a final decision before further actions by the CoH are taken, as the decision of the National federation may be subject to an appeal. The issue is continuously observed by the EHF and regular inquiries are filed.

7. Anti-Corruption and Fair Competition Act

This topic is not further developed because President Antoniou underlines that there is an open case about purported undue influence on referees by a member of a national federation and the panel members should not talk about it for confidentiality and independence reasons.

8. EURO Qualifiers

President Antoniou mentions issues with delegates and the preparation of venues. The preparation is often just finished a few hours before the match when the regulations foresee 24 hours in advance which should be respected. The inspection of the delegates is most of the time the day before but sometimes conducted the same day when the delegates arrive on the match day.

It is underlined that for infringement committed during Champions League matches the punishments are higher than against federations in connection with violations during qualifiers. For some halls, it is very expensive to cover all advertisement so it is less expensive to pay the EHF fine. The participants also agree that sanctions should be higher in Champions League because the income for advertisement for the clubs during Champions League matches is higher. However, a certain balance shall be always made sure as the Legal Regulations applies for both the Champions League and the national teams competitions.

President Antoniou disagrees and underlines that the punishment should be the same for every competition but he agrees that the nature of the match should be taken in account along with TV transmissions and the number of spectators.

It is mentioned that the situation is different in different countries because the owner of the venue, the way of organization of a match respectively responsibilities and many other factors (club, federation, government) have an impact and constitutes different starting points. The marketing supervisor should be able to explain and support the clubs for the marketing and advertisement issues prior and during the games. The same would be helpful for national team competitions. As federations in addition to their basic challenges have to set up a different arena for each match, while clubs know their home venue.

9. EHF Legal Regulations, EHF List of Penalties, EHF Catalogue of Administrative Sanctions

The issue of the applicable point concerning withdrawals within the Catalogue of Sanctions provided by the Legal Regulation concerning wheelchair handball is raised by the EHF as a follow up to the CoA meeting. The participants agree that the points ruled in the Legal Regulations should also be applied for wheelchair handball, as EHF regulations are governing all competitions organized by the EHF in all areas. Of course special clauses are applied for special circumstances. The situation of wheelchair handball has similarities to the one of beach handball. The CoH and the EHF should consider the fact that there are no national structures for wheelchair handball as it is a very small sport. There is a risk to discourage teams to participate to wheelchair handball competition if the regulations are too important and strict at the beginning. Flexibility is important at this level of development. Similar to Beach Handball the EHF Court of Handball proposes to create a special clause for withdrawal in this area. A respective motion will be worked out by Kristian, Yvonne and Libena as a Task Force supported by the EHF Office. The respective motion will be presented to the EHF Executive Committee.

For the moment the CoH and the EHF office agree that the general rules should apply. The circumstances and conditions of the competition shall be taken into consideration with the available means in the Legal Regulations (suspended sentence, etc.).

10. Release of National Team Players

Some clubs do not want to release players to play for national team competition under the given circumstances, partly they express scenarios in which a player travels home and is neither able to join the club nor the national team. In the given situation, clubs are approaching advance for checking the situation for potential issues with cases in which a player cannot return to a country due to the national immigration regulations.

The COVID-19 constitutes a special situation and no predictions are possible under these circumstances. Each case, if coming up has to be judged individually.

For all regular situations the IHF Players Eligibility Code applies which obliges the club to release a player to its national team. In case a player refuses to participate in National competition, such player is not entitled to participate in any activities of its club prior, during and after the requested National team period. In case such a condition is violated, disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against a player.

11. Feedback EURO 2020 Sweden/Austria/Norway

President Antoniou thanks all parties involved in 36 proceedings in total, which had to be treated within a short period of time, mostly overnight. Especially the first days of the EHF Euro 2020 were extremely demanding. All proceedings were handled in a good and efficient way. Members who were involved in the competition, either *via* their teams or as a delegate, were not in use as panel members.

Several cases were again dealing with clothing questions, a further bigger group was direct disqualifications. Concerning the clothing issues the Court of Handball members point out that a strict handling with high penalties within the IHF leads to a more correct conduct by the teams. It was also mentioned that IHF proceedings are conducted in an administrative way.

Upon request of the CoH the EHF confirmed that the Rules applying for clothing during EHF Euros are communicated repeatedly and extensively to the participating delegations, so they have to be aware about the applicable details.

The members of the CoH specifically debate about the rules regarding clothing and the prohibition of wearing protective gear under the official undershorts. A clarification is needed if the players wear equipment under the undershorts.

President Antoniou congratulates the Court of handball members on their jobs during the EURO 2020 and the absence of appeals means that the decisions were fair and accepted. In addition it was positively remarked that all nominations in the various areas secured neutrality towards the parties involved.

An issue is raised about communication with the teams during the competition. Communicating with the participating teams with a particular email address with someone who is onsite and not to the regular email address in the federation is regarded as essential, because the timing is always really short during the competition and any request shall arrive immediately to the right person (passing on next morning might be too late). The team managers are requested by the EHF to provide a specific email address to which legal communication shall be carried out. This email address is used for any request, so it is the responsibility of the participating delegation to communicate the correct email address.

12. Code of Conduct

The participants agree to make a proposal for amending specific provisions in the EHF Code of conduct. This concerns on the one hand the correct conduct of team officials towards the own delegation and on the other hand specifications regarding betting issues, in order to define more precisely due and undue conduct in this area and give a better basis for follow-up and report. Detailed proposals shall be worked out and motioned to the EHF Executive accordingly.

Provisions regarding insurance coverage for health and injuries in competitions were included to the respective competition regulations. Based on those points all delegations participating in final tournaments will be asked to provide the respective insurance policy.

13. Legal Journal n°5

Edition 5 of the Legal Journal was published and distributed in June 2019. Edition 6 is currently worked out.

A specific section in homage to Henk should be included and members are welcome to give their inputs.

As all decisions included to the Legal Journal are anonymized the enclosure of the complete list of Euro 2020 cases would be difficult. The list will be communicated to the members of the CoH individually.

14. Legal Database (LEDA)

All CoH members are very satisfied with the legal data base and find it extremely useful for their work with the cases.

15. Miscellaneous

The participants appreciate that video meetings should be used for cases by the panels in the future in order to facilitate the communication process among the members on the cases.

The next meeting of the Court of Handball will take place in April 2021 prior to the Ordinary EHF Congress taking place 23/24 April 2021.

Motion List:

- Legal Regulations: Withdrawal wheelchair competitions
- Code of Conduct: Conduct team officials, betting restrictions