
MINUTES TO THE 6TH MEETING OF THE (MEN'S) EUROPEAN HANDBALL LEAGUE BOARD

(Parallel to the meeting of the NB and preceding the meeting of the PHB)

Date / Time: Monday, 12 October 2020 / 15:00 – 18:30

Venue: MS Teams Video Conference

Participants:

EHLB:	Nikolas Larsson	Chairman / SWE
	Frank Bohmann	Vice Chairman / GER
	Stefano Podini	Member / ITA
	Patrice Hitz	Member / SUI
	Alf Mangor Johannessen	Member / NOR
	Thierry Wagner	Member / LUX
EHF:	Markus Glaser	Chief Sports Officer
	JJ Rowland	Director BDM/Minutes

1. Welcome and introduction

Following the common meeting with the Nations Board, Nikolas Larsson welcomed the members of the EHLB to the online meeting. Siniša Ostoić - SEHA Gazprom League (Guest) – did not attend the meeting on this occasion.

2. EHLB meeting 03/2020 – Minutes and follow up

Larsson commented on the minutes of the last meeting, informing the members that the money provided by the EHF for the Smart project remains in the account untouched due to the Covid-19 situation. He has informed Nicole Rabenseifner/EHF of this situation as she is responsible for the annual controlling of the project. He also told the meeting that there had been no further progress on the beach handball topic given other priorities.

3. Information flow & Feedback

The members of the board gave their feedback on the current situation in their own leagues:

- **Italy:** some teams had issues with positive players, maximum 200 people in arenas, decisions expected on changes to quarantine regulations, also stricter regulations in sport expected due to rising number of cases, uncertainty how this will affect handball as a semi-professional sport.
- **Switzerland:** numbers increasing and uncertainty about how this will develop for handball.
- **Germany:** Bundesliga resumed, Supercup and three rounds played. Only 20% capacity in arenas, regulations vary from state to state, if a new lockdown is implemented situation will be very difficult for clubs.

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- **Luxembourg:** regulations very strict, with a lot of testing; live streaming service of matches proven popular.
 - **Norway:** league started, maximum 200 spectators permitted, waiting for decision at the end of October on possible extension of numbers permitted to enter the arenas.
 - **Sweden:** only 50 people allowed to watch matches, difficult situation for clubs, many of which have sold season tickets. Scheme to support salaries with government paying 20%, but not as much support for sport as other industries.

4. EHLB Activities

4.1. Project SMART emerging countries/leagues

4.2. Project SMART top/middle ranked nations/leagues

4.3. Project SMART Beach Handball

Smart projects currently on hold due to Covid-19 situation.

Survey: results discussed (see attached) with 15-16 national leagues having taken part and provided their update on the current Covid-19 situation. Results show that clubs are in a difficult financial situation, which will increase from next year.

Conference: planned conference in June 2021 for national leagues discussed. Agreed that the original concept would be kept, conference to take place on fringes of EHF FINAL4 Men in Cologne. All leagues to be invited and be provided with an opportunity to also get to know one another. Mario Leo will be invited to speak at the event again. Event will take place parallel to the General Assembly of the European Handball League Board.

Inputs top leagues: discussing the challenges for clubs, Bohmann agreed with the comments of the EHF President Wiederer regarding handball sticking together, but also stated that clubs and leagues have a commitment to the health of clubs. He sees a problem with releasing players into a situation where the testing regime of other players is not as high as in the Bundesliga, for example.

Larsson stated that the testing regime, based on the EHF hygiene concept, for the Qualifiers is the same as in the EHF club competitions with the need for negative tests before matches.

Glaser confirmed that PCR tests are currently part of the EHF's hygiene concept but that the EHF was now also using Antigen rapid tests that had been distributed to clubs and federations. He also stated that one of the challenges is the quarantine regulations for players returning after playing matches in red-listed countries and whether they could be granted an exemption by local/national authorities.

Bohmann stated that, as yet there were no answers to these issues from national or European authorities.

It was agreed that Larsson/Bohmann would further discuss the topic separately to agree a position ahead of the PHB meeting.

EHPU: Larsson stated that a video conference would be organised with the European Handball Players' Union to discuss the players' opinion to the Covid-19 situation, testing and a safe environment within the next month.

5. EHF Activities – Follow-up

The overview was given during the common meeting; please refer to the EHLB/NB minutes.

6. PHB Meeting 03 & 04/2020 – Preview 10/2020

In addition to other topics covered during the meeting, the issue of the upcoming World Championship in Egypt and player safety/hygiene concept for the event would be raised.

7. Timetable 2021

7.1. Meeting Calendar

It was agreed that the board would see how the situation in early 2021 looks before being able to make progress and develop projects further. A key task will be an evaluation of the European Cup competitions by all stakeholders after the end of the first half of the season.

7.2. Next EHLB Meeting / General Assembly

- Next meeting 8 March 2021
- Conference 11/12 June 2021
- General Assembly 13 June
- Autumn meeting 11 October

8. Other Topics

Topics raised in the joint EHLB/NB meeting were briefly discussed: player agents (seen primarily as a club issue) and education/compensation (mainly a Nations Board/club issue). Contact with 15 leagues currently made, EHLB would like to increase this to 25-30. A follow-up call will take place in late November/early December to update on the Covid-19 situation and recap subsequent the national team week.

9. Closing

Chairman Larsson closed the meeting and thanked all participants for their attendance.

Vienna, 16 October 2020

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Country	Did you finish the League season 19/20 ?	What is the current plan and date for the start of season 20/21?	Do you plan to start with spectators in the arenas ?	Do you plan to start without spectators?	If so do you have an established dialogue with local authorities on a stepwise plan for spectators to be allowed in the Arenas?	Do you plan for a full season or just a short version of a normal season?	Comments you would like to add?
Austria	No. The league was initially interrupted and finally stopped on April 1.	We plan to start with the Supercup on September 1st and the League on September 4th.	We assume that we will reach a maximum of 50% of the capacities.	That is of course not our goal, but we are currently working on a solution that all games in the league will be produced or streamed for TV. For us, this is naturally the condition to be able to start with ghost games	We are currently in the process of developing "event concepts" and coordinating with the respective authorities. In this regard, the situation is very difficult and uncertain	Both. We plan in scenarios. Since the game mode consists of a basic round, an intermediate round and a knockout system, there is, for example, a scenario in which only the basic round is played - or, for example, the intermediate round is deleted.	In terms of statutes, it is not the spusu LIGA that is responsible for running the championship competition in Austria, but the federation (ÖHB / Österreichischer Handballbund). The league is involved in the decisions, but in itself a pure marketing and media platform. A promotional fund has been set up for the largest sports leagues in Austria (including football, ice hockey, handball, etc) to compensate for the (impending) loss of revenue.
Czech Rep	Due to the Covid-19, we have cancelled all the competitions organized by the Czech handball federation except Women's national Cup's Final Four.	All the competitions has already started with carefully monitored situation and with limitations due to the regulations of Czech government. Date of start of the first competitions was on August 29 th , the last competitions starting were on September 19 th .	As previously stated, the competitions are limited by the governmental regulations for epidemiology and hygiene, which are changing quite often. The very beginning of the season has been started with limited amount, but allowing spectators. However since October 5 th there are no more spectators allowed in the sport halls and fields.	The goal of the CHF is to start both with or without spectators in order to realize the sport activity itself, even though it is a major influence on club's budgets, mainly in the higher competitions.	As the CHF is a part of the superior sport organizations that conclude the negotiations with the government and Health ministry of the Czech republic, the CHF by herself does not take a part in such discussions.	We have prepared multiple options for the season 20/21 according to the current epidemiology situation in the country and also communicated with clubs involved their point of view on this matter. From full season played as the best options we also have an option of stating the results after half part, obviously depending on the competition itself	
Denmark	No – we stopped on the 12.th of March b.No. 1 at the time was declared as champion, we announced the upcoming positions as the next teams in the EC tournaments, and number 14 was taken to the lower league and exchanged with number 1 in the 2. league	We plan to starts on the 1.st September	Yes – in the moment we expect to be allowed to take 50% of the capacity into the arenas and hopefully that number will be higher when we reach 1.st of September.		We have a very good dialog (and we had for the hole period) with the Danish Sports organization and we have a dialog with the national authorities about compensation if we most start the season with big restrictions.	We plan for the hole season	Our biggest treats right now are if the Corona have a wake up period or if EHF/ IHF makes big changes in the calendar. We had a huge help from the national authorities in this period and clubs have no economics problem (which is due to the corona ☹️) Of cause there is some concerns about the future if the sponsors have the same ability to support the clubs, but the feed backs from the clubs are much more positive that we have
France	No	Only championship with 16 teams on Home/away matches (no P.O) starting on 24/9/2020	Yes but it's depends on the decisions of the local authorities	No, if local authorities decides to ban the public in the arena we'll postpone the games.	Yes	We foresee 2 options. If, at the halfway point (December 21st), at least 10 of the 14 scheduled matches are not played by each team, we will activate "option B": a short version with another formula	We are very concerned about the postponement of EHL and CL matches and the possibility to place them in the schedule without consultation with the professional leagues.
Germany	No	Championship with 20 teams in 1 st League, 19 teams in 2 nd League	Yes, in consultation with the local and national authorities	In case of local decisions to not allow spectators matches will take place without visitors. This has to be a solution for a limited time	Yes, first testphase is up to end of October	We plan to play the whole season round robin with 38 matches. No cup competition	
Italy	No	5 th of September	WITHOUT, BUT STILL WAITING FOR NEW RULES FROM GOVERNMENT	See 3		Round robin without play offs	EVERYTHING IS STILL UNDER THE DECISION OF THE GOVERNMENT , WHO CAN CHANGE ANYTIME THE RULES ?? CRITIC SITUATION FOR ANY PLANNING – INSURANCE- MRKT PROJECT ... AND SO ON
Luxemburg	No, we decided with all the clubs together to stop the leagues. We declared the champions and made the ranking for the European club competitions	We decided to start on the 05 th sept. weekend. The government gave us the ok (but depending on the current evolution of the pandemic situation). But we concluded that a preparation period of 6 weeks have to be possible with full contact and friendly games (to limit the injuring risk).	That depends what our government will decide on 25 th July (a new rule will be voted). We are not sure if it is possible, anyway we have to accept what the local authorities (city and town administrations) are deciding	Our clubs are not against a start without spectators.	Together with the basketball, football and volleyball federations, we have a common discussion with the authorities. We have also asked for a weekly and regular testing scale for our athletes. Knowing that with the tracing we could have the scheme with a lot of collective quarantines, disturbing massively the championship program.	We have two plans : round-robin system with play-off or without play-off	We have to many unknowns due to the evolution of the virus, so we are depending on the decisions of our government.

	<i>We stopped after 21 out of 22 rounds but had already a winner (Elverum) and two teams who goes down to 1. Division (Follo and Fald St. Hallvard). We cancelled the Play off (Slutspill)</i>	26 th and 30 th of August	<i>We will follow the governments regulation. P.t. 200, and maybe 500 from September. But it can change (up or down).</i>	<i>Yes, if new rules say zero spectators. (So we can have complete league and complete play off)). If we postpone start, we must adjust in the end of the season, and maybe reduce or cancel play off.</i>	<i>Yes, NIF and NHF have dialogue with government See also 3 and 4.</i>	<i>Plan A: Full season (League and play off) If we must adjust pri 1 is Rema 1000-ligaen, and reduce play off. If we must adjust more we need to cancel the play off again.</i>	
Norway	yes, the best leagues for male and female seniors are finished, due to the fact that EHF established 1 st of June 2020 the deadline for sending the names of the teams for European cup-season 2020-2021. However, as our strategy was to finish all the handball competitions in Romania on the field, we are still going with the final tournaments of male and female juniors, all categories, Final Romanian Cup Final Four, male and female and promotion tournament etc.	Romanian Cup male Final four is planned for 15 th and 16 th of August, Romanian Cup female Final four is planned for 22 and 23 of August, Men's Best League is planned to start in 19 of August and Women's Best League in 27 of August. The promotion tournament has yet no date established, but, if it will be possible to be played, the period would be the in the first week of August – men's side and in the middle of August – women's side.	It will depend of the measures taken by authorities involved in the COVID pandemic	The clubs have nothing against starting the season without spectators, so the answer would be YES, if it will not be allowed by authorities to have spectators.	There has been a lot of discussions between federations and Youth and Sports Ministry. The most important thing in this moment is to have the competitions started also for the indoor sports. But it will all be related to the COVID pandemic evolution in our country.	We have plan A and plan B, depending on the moment we will be allowed to start any indoor competitions in Romania.	At the moment, related to handball activities, we are happy that teams are allowed to train outdoors and indoor without any contact. And this is because in this period of the year the focus is on the physical preparation, as we are at the point of season's start. But there are a lot of question marks if the new season can be started as planned and we can only wait to see the evolution of the pandemic and what kind of measures will be so made.
Romania	Yes, we did. The results of the championship were according to the standings of the Regular season. There were no relegated teams; one team was promoted to the Super League, i.e. the number of the teams was increased from 12 to 13.	The 20/21 season starts on August 29.	Yes, we plan to start with spectators in the arenas.			We plan to hold a full season.	
Russia	No. The league was not finished.	The new season starts on the 5 th of September.	Depending on the guidelines given by the government. The league will start with or without spectators on the 5 th of September.	Depending on the guidelines given by the government. The league will start with or without spectators on the 5 th of September.	The Handball federation will follow the guidelines given by the government and more specifically by the Institute for Public Health.	We do plan for a full season without play offs (14 teams). We will however in advance, define different scenarios of possible premature termination.	The challenge before the season is to have defined the protocol of playing in case of COVID cases amongst players in different teams of the league.
Slovenia							
Spain	No, we played 19 games to 30	We started the season with the Supercup August 29 th . The league started September 9 th one week later than the scheduled	Every region has their own policy about it. From 0 to 800 hundred	See Previous	Yes, we did. In spite we've a protocol, the last word is every health department of the regions	We plan to play all the season 34 day games + Copa del Rey + Copa ASOBAL	I think we have most of the problems that all of you have. No incomes for Ticketing, less incomes for all season cards, huge logistic problems, not enough resources to fight against this problem, etc.
Sweden	No Last round of base League and the whole Play offs were cancelled. No team relegated but one promoted	We will have 15 teams (one plus) and play a straight round robin of 28 rounds plus Play offs	From start it is allowed 50 spectators plus teams and officials	Currently there is a dialogue with authorities on increasing spectators to 500 but no decisions yet (as per mid october)	A weak dialogue but it is a sensitive discussion as many other activities in society is open (shopping malls, IKEAs etc). Currently we don't see any increase in spectators before new year	It is 4 rounds less than an ordinary season	The clubs is in a very bad situation financially despite certain government support and If the support is not increased it might be some clubs filing for bankruptcy in jan-feb
Switzerland	No	We are planning to start the league regulary on the 2 nd of September.	Currently we are planning to start the season with spectators. Depending on the regulation of the Country.	We would start the season also without spectators.	The Government of Switzerland will inform all authorities mid of August about further regulations from 1 st of September. Until now we were in an established dialogue with the authorities.	Yes, we are planning a full season. But we will work out now different scenarios. For example what happens, when a club must go into quarantine.	