

interNETional flick

issue 4

By Stephen Dettre

interNETional flick #4

Please note: the views expressed in this news-mail are mine, except where expressly credited to particular authors. News and information has been collected from various contributors as well as Internet sites devoted to Subbuteo/Sports Table Football, including the 'Official Subbuteo Table Soccer Home Page', the 'Caen Table Football Club' home page, the Norwegian Table Football home page maintained by Jon Bergane and others.

WORLD CUP:

As a result of the last issue of "iNf" and my comments on the process of awarding the World Cup I received the following official statement from FISTF: "Concerning the WC 98, the board made a call for candidates for the organisation.

One of the possibilities was to do something in France together with the football WC and possibly HASBRO, but the final decision was motivated by three things:

1. After the resignation of Laurent Garnier from his function as president of the French federation and his replacement by Michel Barrot, France was NOT candidate for the organisation of the event,
2. HASBRO did not have the expected sales of Subbuteo material, and therefore wants to limit the amount of sponsoring they put in table football,
3. When the Board requested candidates for the organisation of the WC, there was only ONE candidate country: Belgium. Furthermore, the playing conditions proposed by the FBFTS with the exceptional support of the french-speaking government of Belgium should be exceptional, and the file presented by Belgium was very appealing. It seems very likely that the competition will be held in Namur, at the time of the "Fetes de Wallonies", which could have a major impact on the publicity of the event.

The decision was officially taken during the Board of Directors meeting in Mons on 08 March 97, so it was not discussed "over the coffee in a bistro".

The Board of Directors is responsible of the attribution of the WC and EC. The playing material is the responsibility of the Commission for the Theory of Table Football, from the Sports Department. It has always been our opinion that we should not be linked to any material producer, and players play now with Subbuteo, Sports, Soccer and Profibase figures alike. It is not our plan to change that.

I can only agree with the fact that so many countries and continents for the WC. We will see what the future will bring and will do our best with the support of Belgium for the World Cup.

-Baudouin Heuninckx, for the Board"

I appreciate the FISTF response, especially as it was fairly fast, and came by e-mail! However, I am still interested in hearing other views on this process.

Materials:

While the majority of players use equipment made by Subbuteo, Global Sports or Profibase, there are always those who want to experiment themselves. I have a mate who once made some figures from wood!

But if you want to use this equipment in a tournament, it needs to be approved by FISTF.

If you want to submit new material, you must send it to Marco De Angelis, the FISTF Sports Director. The material has to conform strictly to the regulations described in the rulebook, and will be evaluated by the

commission for the impact it can have on the game, on the workmanship, and on the possibility of distributing it. Hopefully when the FISTF home page is up and running, it will contain information on these processes. Message me for further details if you are a budding inventor.

Publicity (Part 3: Dealing with the Media)

An couple of addendums to last issue should also be added here: don't forget about the national news agency as a contact point. All countries have one, and often they are international. The bigger ones are famous: Reuters, Agence France Press, Deutsche Press Agentur. But the local domestic news agencies exist everywhere. Find out their contact numbers, because they can be an invaluable resource. Contact me and I can pass on details.

Also, make sure you don't try and have your media release compete with a major news event. If there is a national election happening, or there's been a major event/tragedy/political or sporting event happen, then don't send your media release off on that day.

Also, If your event is on a Saturday, don't send the release off the day before! Give the newspaper at least a week. Even better possibly 10 days. This allows them to better manage their resources. And if you don't hear back from them immediately, don't worry: most newsrooms have a diary into which all the media releases are filed, and this is then checked a week ahead, and then maybe a couple of days ahead of each day.

Dealing with the media.

Your media release has been designed, printed up and mailed off, and now you have to sit back and wait for responses.

But don't expect a flood of inquiries.

Quite often what you will find is that you get inquiries from all those 'other' publications that you included on your list: the 'Gaming and Pastimes' magazine, or a suburban activities newspaper, or perhaps the local district newspaper.

Don't always expect that the national daily newspaper will be rushing to send a reporter and a photographer to your club!

But it doesn't matter. Treat ANY inquiry the same way.

Quite often, the larger newspapers and news organisations monitor the smaller ones for interesting and unusual items, so there is a chance that you could get picked up that way.

At first contact, see if the reporter would like to come out and see what the game is all about. Make sure they understand what the game is: differentiate between Subbuteo/Sports table football and foosball/babyfoot/calcietto.

If they want to do the interview over the phone, try and make sure that they get in your contact number: a phone number of your club/association is worth its weight in gold if you can get it into the publication.

Try and be upbeat during your conversation: if you are enthusiastic, then the reporter will do a better story. If he has to extract information, like a dentist, then it makes it harder for him and you might not find a story in the paper. Therefore, committees deciding on sending press releases should choose a spokesman/woman who can effectively put across the message.

If the reporter does want to meet face-to-face, then arrange for a meeting time and place.

If you have club premises, then that's where you should meet. Even better, pick a time when you can get a lot of people there to play. They don't have to talk with the reporter, but they add to the atmosphere and can be useful if a photographer wants a picture. Also, what looks better to the reporter: a solitary figure having a chat with him, or a room packed with people who all seem to be having fun!

You don't even need all the people there to be players: get friends, relatives, etc to come along too. We did this a number of times, with great effect.

Make sure that you have a selection of pamphlets about your club or association, and if you have some stickers, make sure you give the reporter one.

While I don't suggest you go to the expense of repainting and decorating your venue, it is worthwhile to consider putting up some posters if you have

them of major table soccer tournaments, or anything else. Also make sure you put any trophies on display, etc.

Also, ensure that your players all wear club shirts, etc. Your spokesman should be dressed casually, though it might be an idea if he too brings a club shirt.

Let the media have a flick as well, and even try their hand at playing. This is a good way to highlight that it's not as easy as it looks and is a game of skill and technique.

If there is a photographer, make sure you help him/her. Quite often the photographer will want you to pose in positions that you would never adopt in a match, or have figures all lined up or stacked into an area where they never would be. It doesn't matter, because in the photo, all that's needed is action and objects. It's a publicity shot, not a match shot. Remember that. And also, remember that the photographer will know what looks best in the newspaper.

If you can, provide the media people with coffee and light refreshment. We used to take them downstairs to the club's bar for few drinks where we could really talk about the game! Inevitably we'd end up talking about football, but any common bond is useful.

After the visit, wait a day or so and make a follow-up phone call, just to check whether they have enough information, or need anything else. Leave it at one call: don't become a nuisance!

Try and build up a rapport with journalists at the smaller organisations, and fire off the occasional media release to the major organisations when you have something bigger to publicise.

If the media doesn't respond to your first attempt at a media release, don't despair.

It's usually through regular contact that journalists gain an interest in doing something on your event.

And remember that your media release is competing with hundreds of other news items every day in newsrooms around the world.

CORRECTION:

Jon Henning Bergane informs me that his homepage address was wrong in Issue no.2. It should have been:

<http://www.yi.com/home/BerganeJon/tf/index.htm>

Apologies to Jon!

Internet:

Voting in the competition for the best Web pages (FOR APRIL):

Best design:

- 1: Football de Table Club de Caen (70votes)
- 2: Norwegian Table Football Association (35)
- 3: Subbuteo-Homepage des DSTFB e. V. (21)

Best content:

- 1: The Official Subbuteo table-Soccer Home Page (51)
- 2: Football de Table Club de Caen (50)
- 3: Norwegian Table Football Association (25)

Other News:

FISTF is trying to start an official Internet page, using the help of Jon Bergane,

from Norway. He is currently planning the look and content of the page, and one of his plans is to have a page dedicated to every nation where tf is known to be played. On these pages he will have the latest results, ranking, news, short history of the federation, who to contact and so on.

Some of the things he was thinking about:

1. History of the federation with current status. no. of players/clubs, winners of national champ. and so on.
2. Current ranking
3. Latest results
4. Addresses of boardmembers/contacts of the federation
5. Clubs w/contacts
6. Events list

Internet sites:

Guillem Alsina's 'Official Subbuteo Home Page':

<http://speedy.udg.es/~GA5442/unofsub.html>

Jon Henning Bergane, from Norway:

<http://www.yi.com/home/BerganeJon/tf/index.htm>

The Caen Table Football Club in France:

<http://www.cpod.com/monoweb/subbuteo/>

Check out these three for links to others.

If you know of any others that are not linked, or are new, please e-mail me.

Reminder: If at any time you want to be removed from my mailing list, just send me an e-mail!

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