



In Association with World Athletics



WORLD
ATHLETICS
ASSOCIATED ORGANISATION

WMA General Assembly Minutes Gothenburg, Sweden 16 August 2024



WORLD MASTERS ATHLETICS
GOTHENBURG
CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024

**General Assembly Minutes
of the XXV World Master Athletics Championship.
Ullevi Stadium Gothenburg, Sweden
16 August 2024**

IN ATTENDANCE FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GA)

WMA Executive:

Margit Jungmann (GER), President; Lynne Schickert (AUS), Executive Vice President; Alan Bell (GBR), Vice President Competition; Jean Thomas (FRA), Treasurer; Juan Ordóñez (MEX), Secretary; Antti Pihlakoski (FIN), WA's Representative.

WMA Regional Representatives:

Kannan Arumugam (SGP), representing Asia; Giovanni Tracanelli (ITA), representing Europe; Joe Begley (AUS), representing Oceania; Leonie Etong (CMR), representing Africa; Guillermo Guzman (MEX), North America, Central America & Caribbean Representative; and Richard Amigo (PAR), South America Representative.

Stanley Perkins (AUS), Honorary Life President.

Delegates:

In accordance with sections 14.3, 14.4, 14.5, 14.6, and 14.7 of the WMA Constitution, the WMA Members (former "Affiliates") listed below, by Region, gave proper notice of their Delegates, who in turn had automatic voting rights.

Africa (6):

Algeria (1), Kenya (1), Mauritius (1), South Africa (2), Uganda (1).

Asia (11):

Hong Kong, China (1), India (3), Iran (1), Japan (1), Malaysia (1), People's Rep. of China (1), Philippines (1), Singapore (1), Sri Lanka (1).

Europe (56):

Austria (2), Belgium (2), Czech Republic (1), Denmark (2), Estonia (1), Finland (3), France (5), Germany (5), Great Britain & Northern Ireland (5), Greece (1), Ireland (1), Italy (5), Netherlands (3), Norway (2), Poland (3), Portugal (1), Romania (1), Slovak Republic (1), Spain (5), Sweden (3), Switzerland (2), Turkey (1), Ukraine (1).

North and Central America & the Caribbean (16):

Bahamas (1), Canada (4), Costa Rica (1), Cuba (1), Guatemala (1), Mexico (2), Puerto Rico (1), USA(5).

Oceania (6):

Australia (5), New Zealand (1).

South America (6):

Bolivia (1), Brazil (2), Paraguay (1), Peru (1), Venezuela (1).

-Total of Delegates	- 101
-Total of Council members	- 12
-Total voters in GA	- 113

Note:

At the opening of the Assembly, the first roll call, read by the WMA President, was for 100 Delegates plus 12 Council Members registered.

1 Delegate attended after the first roll call.

Guests:

Organizing Committee of Gothenburg (SWE) for the WMA 2024 World Championship.

Organizing Committee of Bucharest (ROM) for the WMA 2024 Marathon Championship.

Organizing Committee of Gainesville (USA) for WMA 2025 Indoor Championship.

Organizing Committee of Daegu (KOR) for WMA 2026 Stadia Outdoor Championship.

AGENDA / MINUTES**1. 09.00 hrs. Opening of the General Assembly (GA)**

The General Assembly was officially opened at 09.00 hrs.

The WMA President welcomed the WMA Council, Delegates, guests, and observers. She also welcomed the Swedish Delegation, including the President of Swedish Masters Karin Schon, the President of the LOC Anders Prytz, and the CEO Eva-Lena Frick, as well as the Honorary President, service guests, representatives of future organizers, and WMA managers.

There was also a remembrance and minute of silence for WMA Family members who had passed away since the last General Assembly in Tampere, Finland, in 2022.

Cesar Moreno Bravo (MEX)

David Carr (AUS)

Melitta Czerwenka-Nagel (GER)

2. 09.05 hrs. Certification of the proper calling of the General Assembly and voting instructions.

Certification documents for the calling of the General Assembly were sent to the WMA Members with no objections, as per the WMA Constitution 14.3, 14.4, 14.5, 14.6, and 14.7.

The WMA President requested delegates to approve the amended agenda as outlined in the WMA GA Booklet. The amended agenda included two additional motions that had been submitted on time, so there were no issues with their inclusion. The delegates unanimously approved the amendments.

The WMA President then indicated GA would follow Robert's Rules of Order, voting instructions would be given by Stan Perkins, and there will be manual voting counted.

3. 09.15 hrs. Election of 2 scrutineers for the minutes.

Sandy Pashkin (USA) and Robert Schickert (AUS) were proposed, voted and approved unanimously.

4. 09.20 hrs. Election of up to 4 persons to count the votes.

Selma Turkkal (TUR), Mushin Turkkal (TUR), Violeta Guzman (MEX), and Maria Alfaro (MEX) were proposed, voted and approved unanimously.

5. 09.25 hrs. Matters arising from the Minutes of the 2022 General Assembly in Tampere, Finland.

The President advised the minutes from the 2022 General Assembly in Tampere had been sent out in time.

The WMA Secretary reported that no matters had been raised.

The Minutes of the Tampere 2022 General Assembly were approved.

6. 09.35 hrs. Submission and approval of reports from:

President

The President outlined the following from her report:

- Strides in professionalizing operations:
- Creation of dedicated competition management teams, to ensure the quality of each WMA Championships. (Stadia and Non-Stadia)
- Recruitment of experienced volunteers.
- An experienced Management Structure had been developed to support the Council between championships.
- Importance of partnerships with: World Athletics, WMRA, IAU. The most crucial ongoing collaboration was with World Athletics (WA), aiming to integrate masters events into WA competitions like the combined cross-country event in Australia, which had been successful despite limited preparation time. WMA was now preparing for the 2025 Road Festival in San Diego, which was expected to be a major event.
- New initiatives: Digital gallery to recognize outstanding athletes and improvements to the website and social media presence.
- Strengthening regional relationships.
- Preparation for future championships amidst a challenging bidding environment.
- Ongoing review of the Constitution.
- Following Covid, the bidding situation for future championships had become extremely difficult.
- Sponsorship had still been a challenge.

She concluded: "As we look forward, our goal remains to foster a vibrant, inclusive community of Masters athletes engaged in respectful competition".

Executive Vice President

The Executive VP summarized her written report, which was included in the GA Booklet. She remarked that as Executive Vice-President, a key focus has been developing WMA documents and guiding local organizing committees over the past two years. Efforts have been directed towards presenting WMA as a professional organization, with significant progress since Tampere. Collaborating with dedicated colleagues on the Organisational Advisory Committee and Council has been both a pleasure and a privilege. The team remains passionate about supporting the wellness and health of the Masters athletic community through our sport.

Vice President Competition

The VP Competition summarized his written report, which was included in the GA Booklet by outlining it as follows:

- Emphasized that WMAC Gothenburg highlighted the rapid growth of Masters Athletics, which posed both opportunities and challenges for World Masters Athletics (WMA). He reminded the GA about Torun, which was close to maximum and was extremely difficult to Schedule, and that would only continue as masters athletics grew.
- Advised WMA's strategic development increased collaboration with World Athletics (WA) and was deemed beneficial; it offered significant growth opportunities for WMA.
- Noted that the inclusion of the half marathon in the WMA championships had become increasingly challenging. Collaborating with WA to host that event aligned with the philosophy that WMA was a part of the broader athletic community.
- Negotiations with WA were conducted amicably, with both parties having their respective mandates.
- Assured that any Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with WA would be in the best interest of masters athletics globally.
- Numerous initiatives had been introduced to elevate the technical standards of WMA championships moving forward.
- Acknowledged that WMA's now more hands-on approach in managing and overseeing the work at the championships.
- Upon assuming his role, a strategy was implemented to ensure continuous communication with championship providers. Monthly online conference meetings were held with Local Organizing Committees (LOCs), ensuring WMA stayed fully informed about LOC activities and that championship expectations were being clearly communicated and met.
- Noted the WMA Competition Committee now had global representation.

He concluded by thanking the WMA Council for their support and recognising the work of the Management Team, especially Michael Serralta and Archie Jenkins, for creating a positive operational framework that delivers for the athletes.

Secretary

The Secretary summarized his written report, which was included in the GA Booklet. He emphasized that maintaining effective communication with Members is crucial, particularly before General Assemblies and during Championship registrations. He urges all Members to assist in improving the accuracy of the Members' database to acquire better responsiveness. He requested that Keith Lively's emails be acknowledged upon receipt, even if a more detailed response would be provided later.

It was noted that in 2022 there were 175 affiliated countries, and that number had now increased to 186, which was only 28 fewer than WA.

He concluded by saying: "There is still so much to do and improve, but I am confident that thanks to our team effort, we will succeed and excel for the sake of our organization".

The President asked GA delegates if they had any questions about the four reports presented. ***No questions were raised, and the GA approved all four Reports.***

7. 10.05 hrs. Submission and approval of report from Auditor

As per the report included in the GA booklet for the period 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2023.

The report was approved by GA.

8. 10.15 hrs. Submission and approval of report from Treasurer

As per the report included in GA booklet,

He highlighted the following from his report:

-Balance Sheet: The situation at the end of 2023 remained strong, with assets totaling approximately \$409,000 USD, though was lower than in 2021 due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic.

-Profit and Loss: The two-year period ending 31 December 2023, resulted in a deficit of \$84,228 USD due to the continued challenges of the pandemic. However, due to strong financial results since 2013, WMA could cover the deficit;

-Working Capital: At the end of 2023 amounted to \$390,000 USD which was a good level to ensure WMA's financial stability.

He thanked colleagues on the Councils, especially Presidents Stan Perkins and Margit Jungmann, for their trust, support, and friendship. He also wishes the new Executive Council a successful term and good luck in their future endeavors. He concluded: "My time with the WMA has been a cherished chapter in my life."

The President asked GA delegates if there were any questions on the Auditor or Treasurer's reports.

IRAN Delegate suggested including the 'Cash Flow Statement'; this addition would offer comprehensive insights into the cash transactions occurring throughout the financial year.

The President noted the suggestion for future financial reports moving forward.

The report was approved by GA.

9. 10.20 hrs. Submission and approval of report from the WA Representative.

As per the report included in the GA booklet, he expanded on his report, focusing on the present and future cooperation between WMA and WA.

He outlined that one of WA's key performance indicators was to create better pathways and stronger links between WMA and WA by 2025.

He thanked the WMA Council and wished everyone good luck with the competition.

Ian Richards (GBR) asked whether WA considered how rule changes that were focused only on elite athletes affected and caused potential issues for non-elite athletes using local tracks.

WA Representative agreed that when considering mass-participation athletics, more flexibility in the rules was necessary.

WMA Vice President Competition noted that the WA rulebook allowed each National Federation to make adjustments for their own needs. Also clarified the WA's handbook facilities model applied only to their championships and did not impact local tracks. Any changes for local tracks would need to be addressed by contacting the respective National Federation.

The report was approved by GA.

10. 10.30 hrs. Election of WMA Honorary Members.

Special Pins

Wilma Perkins (AUS): Bronze Pin.
Michael Serralta (PUR): Bronze Pin.
Mushin Turkkal (TUR): Bronze Pin.
Mary V. Rosado (USA): Bronze Pin.
Marilyn Mitchell (USA): Bronze Pin.
Richard Blurton (AUS): Bronze Pin.
Kannan Arumugam (SGP): Bronze Pin.
Bill Murray (USA): Bronze Pin.
Helena Carvalho (POR): Bronze Pin.
Jerry Bookin-Weiner (USA): Bronze Pin.
Mauro DeCarly (ITA): Bronze Pin.
Vern Christensen (CAN): Bronze Pin.
Franz Kropik (AUT): Bronze Pin.
Michel van Osch (NED): Bronze Pin.
Hossein Gholami (IRI): Bronze Pin.

For extraordinary service to WMA

Claude Hemmer (LUX): Bronze Pin.
Alex Rotas (GBR): Bronze Pin.
María Alfaro (MEX): Silver Pin.
Jean Thomas (FRA): Silver Pin.

Honorary Personal Life Member

Jean Thomas (FRA)
Brian Keaveney (CAN)

11. 11:05 hrs. Coffee break

12. 11.25 hrs. Elections.

Explanation of Robert's Rules of Order for meetings provided by Honorary Life President Stan Perkins. As per the constitution the President confirmed the Chair of the meeting would be passed over to the Executive Vice President (EVP) as she was a candidate in the election process for WMA President and could not be part of the process.

President

The only candidate offered a 3-minute presentation to GA.
As the sole nominee, Margit Jungmann was automatically elected. She formally accepted her nomination.

Margit Jungmann (GER) was re-elected as President without dissent.

Treasurer

The only candidate offered a 3-minute presentation to GA.

As the sole nominee, Colleen Barney was automatically elected. She formally accepted her nomination.

Colleen Barney (USA) was elected as Treasurer without dissent.

13. 11:45 hrs. Report on Bid situation and vote of the procedure (Indoor 2027 and Stadia 2028)

Margit Jungmann explained to the GA that although some Bids for the 2028 Stadia Championship were received, none were complete. Therefore, no inspection visit could be made. She also remarked that no bid for the 2027 Indoor Championship has been received yet. She invited the GA delegates to return to their countries' Federations to lobby and raise interest in hosting the Championship.

The WMA president moved the following motion: "The General Assembly grants the responsibility to award the 2027 WMACi and 2028 WMA Stadia Championships to the WMA Council".

Seconded by USA.

The motion was carried unanimously without dissent.

14. 12:25 hrs. Presentation of the coming Championships.

2024 Bucharest Marathon

The Local Organizing Committee, led by Laurentius Mihai, made a video presentation for the 2024 Marathon Championship, which would be held in conjunction with the Bucharest Marathon. They declared that everything was ready to start the competition on 13 October 2024 around 8-9 am. A time limit of 6 hrs. would be implemented.

2025 Indoor Championship Gainesville

The Local Organizing Committee led by Stephen Rodriguez, made a video presentation for the 2025 Indoor Championship, emphasizing early registration due to the time taken to get a USA visa. They also remarked that even with some misleading rumors about the event's cancellation, Gainesville is ready and looking forward to hosting it from 23-30 March 2025. The website was visible and had all the information needed. Entries were open and would close on 23 January 2025. The link to the Visa Waiver Program was on the website.

2026 Stadia Championship Daegu

The Local Organizing Committee led by Mr. KIHOOON CHIN, Secretary General; made a video presentation for the 2026 Stadia Championship, which will take place from 22 August to 3 September 2026. The presentation outlined the three venues and other facilities to be used during the championships. Daegu is the first City to host an indoor and outdoor WMA Championships.

15. 13:00 hrs. GA broke for lunch

After lunch, the voting count was 88 delegates and 12 Council members, for **a total of 100 votes.**

16. 14:30 hrs. Amendments to the WMA Constitution, By-Laws, and Rules of Competition.

Motions to the WMA-By-Laws

Proposed by USATF Masters

Delete 12.1(x) of the By-Laws and replace with the following:

(x) consider and decide on proposed changes to the Constitution and the By-Laws,

Delete By-Law 18.8 of the By-Laws and replace with the following:

18.8 The Competition Committee shall consider any proposal relating to the Rules of Competition made by the Council, a member of the Competition Committee, a Region, or the Vice-President Competition. The Chair shall submit the Competition Committee's recommendations relating thereto to the Council for approval.

Delete Article 14 of the 2023 WMA Rules of Competition and replace with the following:

WMA Rules of Competition Article 14 - Modification of Rules

14.1 The Competition Committee shall consider any proposal relating to the Rules of Competition made by the Council, a member of the Competition Committee, a Region, or the Vice-President Competition. The Chair shall submit the Competition Committee's recommendations relating thereto to the Council for approval.

14.2 The WA changes or modifies their rules each year. The WMA Competition Committee must review these rules, accept, reject or make WMA modifications. The Council will vote on the recommendations from the Competition Committee on the above.

14.3 Any application by an Organising Committee for any rule modifications for a WMA Championship must be lodged with the Vice-President Competition no later than five (5) days after the closing of entries

The Vice-President Competition shall submit the motion for Council decision, and if accepted, add the rule modification into the Athlete's Handbook.

Reason: There is a conflict between the WMA By-Laws and the WMA Rules of Competition in the method in which WMA changes the Rules of Competition. Currently the By-Laws envision changes in Rules of Competition to be considered by the General Assembly, but the Rules of Competition envisions changes thereto subject to the approval of Council. Additionally, the current Rules of Competition, permits a Member to bring a proposed change to the Rules of Competition directly to the General Assembly without discussion or approval by the Competition Committee. This proposal would align the By-Laws and Rules of Competition, to require the approval of Council to make a change with the recommendation of the Competition Committee. It also brings WMA in alignment with the process that World Athletic uses.

Seconded by Sweden.

The motion carried unanimously.

Competition Motions

Following a proposal at the General Assembly (GA) in Tampere, Finland, in 2022 it was decided that hurdles events and their specification should be examined, with a view to suggesting future developmental changes for those events.

The Vice President (Competition) (VP) appointed a group to undertake that review and report back to the Competition Committee by January 2023. That group included an athlete, a coach, a technical official and an officer of a master's association (who acted as the group chair)

The content of the review was based upon the motions put to the GA –

1. Increase the hurdle spacing for W50-59 from 7.00m to 8.00m for the 80m hurdles (outdoors) and 60m hurdles (indoors)
2. Increase the hurdle height from 0.762m to 0.838m for the W40-49 80m hurdles (outdoors) and 60m hurdles (indoor)
3. Lower the W75+ height from 0.686m to 0.600m
4. Reduce the hurdle spacings for W70-79 to 6.50m (currently 7.00m)
5. Reduce the hurdle spacings for W80+ to 6.00m (currently 7.00m)
6. For M80+ and W70+ 60m indoor hurdles, 6 hurdles with 11.00m to the first hurdle, 6.00m between hurdles and 19m to the finish line (currently 5 hurdles with 12.00m to the first hurdle, 7.00m between hurdles, 20.00m to finish line)
7. For M80+ and W70+ 80m outdoor hurdles, 8 hurdles with 11.00m to the first hurdle, 6.00m between hurdles and 27.00m to the finish line (currently 8 hurdles with 12.00m to the first hurdle, 7.00m between hurdles and 19.00m to the finish line)

The review group undertook several rounds of research amongst the hurdling cohorts in a cross section of nations. (Belgium, USA, Oceania, France) There was significant support for looking at amendments of the hurdle event specifications for the older athletes – M80+ and W70+.

The review group also looked at the safety implications of the current events and the best way to address how to alleviate potential danger and facilitate good competition for older athletes. Several of the points raised have facility and resource implications.

The recommendations for consideration by the GA are.

1. Change the M80+ and W70+ indoor 60m hurdles to 5 hurdles with 11.00m run in, 6.00m between hurdles and 25.00m to finish line.
2. Change the M80+ and W70+ outdoor hurdles to 8 hurdles with 11.00m run in, 6.00m between hurdles and 27.00m to the finish line.
3. Amend rule 22.6.2 that states a hurdler will be disqualified 'if they knock down or displace any hurdle by hand, body or the front of the lower lead limb' should be changed for masters to remove 'body or front of the lead limb.'
4. Remove the insistence on master's hurdle races not using rocker, scissor, foldable or collapsible hurdles so that the danger element of falling when a hurdle topples is reduced.

The rationale for these recommendations:

The dilemma for the master's athletics family is the age range for which competition is provided and the huge range of abilities within each, and across, all age groups. A major factor in all of the considerations was that, as athletes gain in years, their ability to show the same flexibility, range of movement and body weight all reduce.

The recommendations take account of the implications for competition providers-

- The need to re-mark the hurdle spacings on the track
- The need to possibly provide a newer specification of hurdle.

Kalle Glomsaker, the Competition Committee Representative from Norway, supported the motion by noting that:

- The Committee agreed with the review group's arguments from after the last GA.
- Reports showed the proposed changes were favorable for athletes.
- The impact of these rule changes on organizers and arena owners was a concern.
- Frequent changes could complicate securing organizers.
- Introducing new hurdles for masters and additional arena markings would be challenging.
- Consequently, the Committee had reservations about some of the suggested changes.

Wilma Perkins from Australia, commented the motion by stating that:

As highlighted in points (1) and (2), the oldest hurdlers globally advocated for changes.

-She believed there was a misunderstanding about points (3) and (4) and their purpose, clarifying there was no intention to compromise the event's integrity.

-Her primary concern was point (4), where older athletes' contact with hurdles wasn't forceful enough to knock them over, which could affect their safety and discourage them from continuing the sport.

Alan Bell and Margit Jungmann explained that the motions to be voted on are the ones on top of page 40 of the GA Booklet. (written below)

1. Agree with recommendations 1 and 2 on the grounds that the integrity of the hurdles events has been protected and the challenge for the athlete remains.

Motion seconded by USA. The voting count was: 84 in favor, 10 against, 6 abstentions.

Motion carried.

2. Disagree with recommendation 3 as amending the rule will undermine the quality of hurdling technique and give, particularly the younger age groups, an opportunity to 'illegally' complete a race.

Motion seconded by Sweden. The voting count was 90 in favor, 9 against, and 1 abstention.

Motion carried.

3. Disagree with the use of nonstandard hurdles on the same grounds 2 as above. The authenticity of the competition must be assured, and the recommended toppling requirements are part of that assurance.

Motion seconded by Sweden. The voting count was 90 in favor, 4 against, and 6 abstentions.

Motion carried.

Proposed motions on changes to the competition rules by the Competition Committee.

Sandy Pashkin spoke on behalf of Bill Murray to explain the reasoning behind these motions, making clear that there are suggestions for rules WMA does not currently have. Also, this is to allow women in many countries to join in with the men to have a competition.

Motion 1: Amend CR32.2.1 to add Decathlon (Women) to the list of events in which WMA keeps Records.

Add CR 39.4 The order of events for the Women's Decathlon.

First Day: 100m, Long Jump, Shot Put, High Jump, 400m.

Second Day: Short Hurdles, Discus, Pole Vault, Javelin, 1500m.

Motion seconded by USA. The voting count was: 97 in favor, 2 against, and 1 abstention.

Motion carried.

Vern Christensen (Canada) suggested on a point of order that after Motions have been seconded, time be allowed for anyone with a comment or question to make it. The President acknowledged Canada's comment.

Motion 2: Add a tie breaker in combined events

39.13 If two athletes are tied for first place in combined events competition, the procedure to break the tie is the following:

(a) the athlete who, in the greater number of events, has received more points than the other athlete shall be awarded the higher place.

(b) if the two athletes are still tied after the application of Rule 39.13(a) or if there are 3 or more athletes tied for first place, then the athlete who has the highest number of points in any one event shall be awarded the higher place.

(c) if the athletes are still tied following the application of Rule 39.13(b), the athlete who has the highest number of points in a second event, etc. shall be awarded the higher place.

(d) if the athletes are still tied following the application of Rule 39.13(c), it shall be determined to be a tie. Reasoning: All other field events have a rule to break ties for first place.

VP Competition, Alan Bell, spoke in favor of the motion:

He highlighted that the WMA rules for combined events had become more cohesive and professional and noted the increased complexity of organizing combined events in WMA championships. He also explained the new rules and provided clear guidelines for adjudicating ties in combined event competitions.

Motion seconded by Australia.

Canada spoke against the motion from a former Combined Event Athlete's Perspective. After two days of intense competition, a tie should remain a tie. On principle, the athlete opposed breaking ties through the current rule, as the point differentials between events and their values are overly complicated. Athletes invest significant effort over two days, and in the case of a tie, both should be awarded the same medal.

The voting count was: 86 in favor, 13 against, and 1 abstention

Motion carried

Motion 3: Replace WMA CR 26.3 rule

The time allowed for trials in vertical jumps apply to all of the competitors in a mixed age or sex groups flight. The progressions apply to all competitors in a flight in a mixed age/sex group, except if a competitor has won their age group and is attempting to break a WMA Record.

South Africa suggested an amendment to the motion, arguing that the second sentence of the rule was unfair because it only related to world records and not national records. However, it failed. The motion stands as is.

The president confirmed South Africa wanted the second sentence of the motion amended to read: "The progressions apply to all competitors in a flight in a mixed age/sex group, except if a competitor has won their age group and is attempting to break a Record".

Sandy Paskin (USA) spoke against the amended motion:

The rule was a WMA rule and it was applied to world records at WMA championships. Each country could add their own adaptations to the rules.

VP Competition, Alan Bell, suggested to the competition committee members that were present amending the second sentence of the motion to a cover all phrase as follows:

“The progressions apply to all competitors in a flight in a mixed age/sex group, except if a competitor has won their age group and is attempting to break a WMA or National Record in the appropriate championship”.

The president suggested leaving the motion as it was initially not changing it all and asked for the motion to be voted on;

Motion seconded by Switzerland. The voting count was: 98 in favor, 0 against, and 2 abstentions.

Motion carried.

Motion 4: Rule Modification:

The No Advantage concept be applied as a modification to World Athletics rule 54.2 for athletes aged 65 and older. Where older athletes are unable to fully comply with the required “straightened” leg but are not gaining any speed advantage because of a soft knee, then judges may apply the No Advantage concept and not issue a yellow or red card.

Background: Masters Athletics was established to enable athletes to continue participating in their chosen sport. It supports changes to rules and implements specifications to encourage continued participation. The inability to straighten the leg on contact is a physiological characteristic of aging. It should be recognised in the same way that other physiological changes are reflected in rule changes for the other athletic disciplines. These physiological changes are a disadvantage to a walker.

The role of judges is to enforce the rules of racewalking to prevent athletes from gaining an unfair advantage. In line with adapting rules/specifications for older athletes in other track and field disciplines, applying the No Advantage concept seems appropriate. It is there to cater for when a perfectly straight leg cannot be achieved but where the athlete is seriously trying to racewalk correctly. Soft knees invariably result in poor thrust, a flat-footed landing, shortened stride, and hence a net loss of speed – not an advantage! It is not there to condone a bent leg creep (which invariably occurs when trying to go too fast). Walkers should still look like racewalkers with an essentially straight leg and high toe on contact.

The debate regarding racewalking rules has been going on for many years. The purist argue international racewalking rules must be applied to all racewalking events. However, as a person ages, the effect of aging on the body significantly affects their ability to participate in athletics events such as racewalking.

Over time, rules for many masters’ athletics events have been modified from the “Olympic standards” to recognise the impact of ageing, for example, changing weights and sizes of throwing implements, hurdles heights and spacing, and length of distance events.

We believe the significant physiological impact of ageing from 65 onwards provides a compelling argument to modify the rule for Masters without allowing an advantage.

VP Competition, Alan Bell, spoke on the motion on behalf of Competition Committee:

The competition committee and Council were very firmly against changing the regulation on the principle that the integrity of any World Athletics rule should not be undermined. Research was also conducted across the masters race walking community, who felt very strongly about that issue. An athlete's age does not mean the rule should be changed to make the event easier for them.

The President advised the position of the competition committee, which the WMA council had endorsed had been provided.

Great Britain seconded the motion.

Ian Richards from Great Britain supported the motion by explaining that:

He participated in the 1980 Olympics and noted that WA rules were specific to their championships without affecting the event's overall integrity. The rule in question, introduced in the 1990s, changed from requiring walkers to only straighten their leg when passing over it to requiring straight legs from heel contact to the upright position. This rule aimed to slow walkers down due to judges' difficulties in observing contact, but it led to injuries among older walkers, some of whom had to quit the sport. Allowing a slight bend in the knee would reduce these injuries and would not be considered cheating. This change was seen as necessary to protect older athletes and keep them in the sport.

The WMA race walking rule was stricter than the Olympic rule. Under WMA rules, athletes who received three (3) red cards in an event were disqualified, whereas WA rules allowed athletes to serve a time penalty in pit lane after three (3) cards, only disqualifying them upon receiving a fourth (4th) card. A proposed rule change in Great Britain came after many disqualifications due to harsh weather conditions in Riccione (2007), leading to a discussion that judges should use common sense considering conditions and age. This approach worked well until a new panel adopted stricter standards for higher-level competitions, which did not account for older master athletes. He concluded by saying that older master athletes should not be judged by the same criteria as Olympic-level walkers.

Austria (Franz Kropik) spoke against the motion:

As a national race-walking judge, he expressed concern that changing the rules would fundamentally alter the event, making it no longer race-walking. He stated that a new discipline would need to be created if the rules were changed.

VP Competition (on behalf of the Competition Committee):

Explained that Great Britain had complicated the motion by raising concerns about the strict application of WMA rules. He clarified that no formal request had been made to the competition committee to implement the penalty zone rule in masters race walking. He stated that, for clarification and consistency, a motion would need to be submitted to standardize race-walking rules by incorporating the penalty zone into WMA structures.

He further noted the difficulty in expecting judges to discern which athletes may have medical conditions that prevent the complete application of race walking rules and regulations while competing.

Australia spoke for the motion:

The No-Advantage concept should be applied as a modification for athletes aged 65 and older. Older athletes are unable to fully comply with the required "straightened" leg but are not gaining

any speed advantage because of a soft knee. The proposal was put forward to try to keep walkers in the sport as they age and have trouble straightening their knees.

***The motion was put to a vote. 11 votes in favor, 80 votes against, and 9 abstentions.
The Motion failed.***

Motion 5

- (i) To allow World Records for men's and women's 4 x 1500m Relay Races in all age groups from 35 years of age.
- (ii) To allow 4 x 1500m Relay Races – 5 or 10-year age grouping to be included and run at the World Masters Athletics Championships.

Background:

The 4 x 1500m relay is a highly popular and top-rated event among middle-distance runners throughout Australia and the rest of the world.

Many, if not all, the Australian state and territory masters' athletics associations recognise records for the 4 x 1500m relay race.

The depth and strength of middle distance running in masters is evident by the numbers and quality of the 1500m at the World Masters Athletics Championships.

There is certainly support from some very notable Australian middle/long-distance masters champions, including Steve Moneghetti.

World Athletics maintains 4 x 1500m records for the open athletes. Indeed, they run the World Relay Championships, which includes the 4 x 1500m.

There is a magical history of global middle distance (mile/1500m) running, including such legends as Roger Bannister, John Landy, Herb Elliott, Peter Snell, John Walker, Jim Ryun, Sebastian Coe, Steve Ovett, Steve Cram, Hichem El G, Faith Kipyegon, Sifan Hissan, Mary Decker, Zola Budd, and many, many more.

The 800m is relatively short for the longest relay event. A 1500m relay would likely entice outstanding middle/long distance runners (i.e. 1500m and over) to compete. The 800m is a very different event from the 1500m, with speed playing a more significant role in the 800m and stamina more in the 1500m – both at the margin, as both events require both skills.

Wilma Perkins, Australia, spoke for the motion:

She noted that the proposal was self-explanatory and aimed to enable world records for men's and women's 4 x 1500m relays in all age groups from 35 and above. She stated that the event needed to be incorporated into the world championships because sprinters had opportunities with the 4 x 100m and 4 x 400m relays. At the same time, distance athletes currently lack a relay event at the world championships. Therefore, she believed that this event should be included.

WMA Statistician and Records Vice Chair (Sandy Pashkin) commented about the motion:

She polled regions worldwide and found that none included the event in their championships. She noted that Australia, the country proposing the motion, did not have records for the event. She contended there was no justification for WMA, as a global organization, to adopt records for an event that was rarely held internationally.

The motion was seconded by Austria.

The President noted the motion contained two (2) parts:

-The first being world records for the 4 x 1500m relay; and

-The second is the inclusion of the event in the WMA championships.

She also noted that adding another event to the program for the world championships would add another day to the already full championship, which would be a problem.

VP Competition (Alan Bell) spoke against the motion:

He stressed that the WMA championships were at maximum capacity in terms of schedule times. He further explained that no one wanted to work from 6 a.m. to 12 a.m., and the championships were close to that at present. He explained that adding any additional event to the schedule would be extremely difficult. He also noted that middle-distance athletes had a wide range and variety of events to select from now.

Amendment Proposed by Australia (Lisa Attenborough): Remove item (ii) from Motion 5

Amended on Motion 5:

(i) To allow World Records for men's and women's 4 x 1500m Relay Races in all age groups from 35 years of age.

Amended Motion seconded by Austria.

The motion was put to a vote.

55 votes in favor, 42 votes against, and 5 abstentions. (102 votes counted after three attempts, 2 more votes than delegates and council members present).

Note: The President, in consultation with the GA, agreed the majority of votes were in favor of the motion; therefore, the motion was carried.

The Motion was carried.

Motion 6. Proposed by Australia Masters Athletics.

Motion 7. Same as Motion 6 (i) - Proposed by the Swedish Master Athletic.

(i) To allow World Records across all age categories for 4 x 400m Mixed Relay Races in, all masters athletics age categories.

(ii) To allow 4 x 400 meters Mixed Relays – 5 or 10-year age groupings to be included and run at World Masters Athletics Championships.

Background:

Relays are a popular event throughout Australia and throughout the rest of the world. IAAF/World Athletics first introduced Mixed Relays in 2017. Since then, the mixed relay event has grown in popularity. World Masters Athletics introduced Mixed Relay races at the World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships in Torun, Poland, in 2023.

The 4 x 200m event proved successful. Teams put their women and men in different running orders, and the event creates excitement when large leads are reversed when men and women are running against each other.

In March 2022, World Athletics changed the rule - every team must use the order man-woman-man-woman. This event would be an exciting addition to the World Masters Athletics calendar of events, and introducing recognised World Records would add to athlete participation, team spirit, and camaraderie.

Amendment Proposed by Australia (Lisa Attenborough): Remove item (ii) from Motion 6

Amended Motion:

(i) To allow World Records across all age categories for 4 x 400m Mixed Relay Races in, all masters athletics age categories.

WMA Statistician and Records Vice Chair (Sandy Pashkin), Explained it would be challenging to establish records for an event lacking specific rules in the WMA handbook. She emphasized that there would be no records for an event not conducted at any masters championships.

The WMA President noted the competition committee would need to implement rules for the event.

WMA Statistician and Records Vice Chair (Sandy Pashkin) commented that the purpose of having event records was to have athletes compete to see who the best was. Therefore, the sequence must be competition, followed by records.

The President asked the proposing Countries if they wanted to change their proposals.

The Sweden delegate spoke for the motion. He noted that competitions for mixed relays were held in Sweden and could not see an issue with having records for the event. He remarked that it was not about records being set at a championship event, which he stated were already being conducted in several countries. He noted there were rules for the event under World Athletics.

The President noted that the events had to be conducted under the same rules, and the WMA competition committee had to implement those rules.

VP Competition (Alan Bell) spoke on behalf of the Competition Committee and Noted there appeared to be a willingness to introduce the event to masters competitions. Stated that the WMA council could mandate the competition committee to develop a set of rules and have an implementation date.

He then asked the proposing countries if it would be acceptable to amend the motion "pending the publication of standardized rules."

Both Australia and Sweden agreed to an amendment.

Amended Motion:

To allow World Records in the 4 x 400m mixed relays in all masters age categories, pending the implementation of the rules by the WMA competition committee.

Seconded by Sweden

The amended Motion was put to a vote. 96 votes in favor, 4 votes against, 0 abstentions. The Amended Motion was carried out by a majority of the GA.

Motion 8

Proposed by the Swedish Master Athletic.

That world records should apply for 4x200m indoor mixed relays.

The President noted that the same amendment as Motions 6/7 must apply to this motion.

WMA Statistician and Records Vice Chair (Sandy Pashkin) made a recommendation about the motion on behalf of WMA, agreeing with the President and stated after the competition committee implemented the rules then records could be introduced.

Amendment Proposed by Margit Jungmann (Germany):

Add to "That World Records should apply for 4 x 200m indoor mixed relays".

Amended Motion:

To allow World Records in the 4 x 200m indoor mixed relays in all masters age categories, pending the implementation of the rules by the WMA competition committee.

Seconded by Australia.

The motion was put to a vote. 100 votes in favor, 0 votes against, 0 abstentions.

The Motion was carried unanimously.

Motion 9

Proposed by the Swedish Master Athletic.

That the records should be recorded beginning from 2024 WMA in Gothenburg.

Motion Withdrawn by Sweden.

Motion 10

Proposed by the Swedish Master Athletic.

That world record should apply for a 10k road race.

VP Competition (Alan Bell) Highlighted that research shows that in the UK alone, 31 registered 10km road races took place over the past weekend, each with an average of 400 participants, with the number of masters competitors unknown. He remarked that globally, it would be unfeasible for WMA to track and maintain accurate records for all such events, citing the example of the London Marathon, where analyzing 50,000 participants to identify potential world records would be an enormous challenge.

Sweden spoke for the motion, noting that the race organizers were responsible for submitting the record application. The popularity of these events should not preclude WMA from maintaining world records for them.

The motion failed due to the lack of a seconder.

Motion 11

Proposed by the Swedish Master Athletic.

That world record should apply for half marathon.

With the same reasoning as Motion 10.

The motion failed due to the lack of a seconder.

Motion 12

Proposed by the Swedish Master Athletic.

That the records should be recorded beginning from 2024 WMAC in Gothenburg.

Motion withdrawn.

Motion 13

Proposed by BMAF.

The British Masters Athletics Federation proposes on behalf of GB&NI for the inclusion of M80 and W80 categories in World and European Mountain Running Championships.

The WMRA, the body overseeing mountain running, adopted this position (Jan 2023).

Background:

- The age categories are currently defined in clause 206 of the WMRA WMMRC Regulations 2025 – see https://wmra.ch/files/MastersWCh2025_-_Regulations.pdf
 - from the first world championships in 1998 (Kitzbüchel) to those in 2007 (Bludenz) the upper age group varied from 65+ to 75+ with no upper limit.
 - from 2008 to 2010 the upper age group was 80+.
 - the ban followed a safety incident involving an 80+ competitor after completion of the 2010 race when many competitors of all ages suffered from extreme cold in wintery weather conditions.
 - safety management has improved immensely since 2010 through accumulated experience and the skillful application of competitor tracking technology e.g. the 2023 Calheta, Madeira, Long Race.
 - the ban appears to have been made on the single arbitrary premise that participation above the age of 79 carried an inherently unacceptable higher level of risk than did participation at younger ages.
 - WMRA support was in response to an evidential submission by Anne Buckley enclosing a document of support from 15 athletes the majority aged 70 and over.
- a key point in the submission to WMRA was that analysis of UK fell (mountain) races found 'no incidents or safety issues involving 80+ athletes' in recent years.

The President commented that WMA worked in cooperation with the WMRA, and they conducted the World Mountain Running Championships for WA and WMA. WMA intended that the WMRA conduct the championships under WMA control and rules, and it worked very well.

British Masters Athletics Federation (Ian Richards) spoke for the motion, remarking that mountain running was expanding, with more 80+ year-old runners participating. The motion asked WMA to extend the existing age range up five (5) years (to 84 years old) because the WMRA had extended its limit. He believes that if that did not happen, there would be a position where

WMA held its championships in an open race, and an 80-year-old could compete but not be considered for the WMA championships.

He noted the argument had always been on safety grounds, but the WMRA had stated that it no longer applied, and medical opinion stated there was no longer a problem.

The President noted WMA council had voted against the change, so now it was up to the GA.

VP Competition (Alan Bell) acknowledged that for many delegates, the discipline of mountain running was unfamiliar and did not take place within their jurisdictions. As someone who had attended the last two championships held in partnership with WMRA, he strongly disagreed with the argument that safety concerns no longer apply. He raised concerns about older athletes being unsupervised in remote areas, far from emergency services, which could pose significant risks. He stated, with the entire agreement of WMA medical officer Dr. Peters, that WMA's position was they could not guarantee the safety of participants at altitude in very rough terrain.

EMA Representative (Giovanni Tracanelli) also elaborated on Alan's comments, supporting the opposition to the Motion. He remarked that only a few athletes in that age group register. The courses are harder every time, and that is a concern. The category age banned is not arbitrary; it is based on safety grounds and the small number of athletes participating.

Seconded by Ireland.

Austria (Franz Kropik) commented that in a conversation with a seasoned mountain runner in his 70s, he emphasized the importance of protecting older runners, noting their scarcity in the sport. He mentioned that older runners are provided shorter distances or more accessible courses to accommodate them in Austria. He also suggested that younger athletes could accompany older runners during races for added support. Additionally, he proposed the appointment of a safety officer on the route to enhance overall safety measures.

The President suggested the matter be left to the WMRA to discuss during their meeting and propose appropriate solutions.

The motion was put to a vote. 7 votes in favor, 79 votes against, 14 abstentions.

The Motion failed.

16:20 hrs. Motions to the WMA Constitution

Explanatory Statement

In keeping with worldwide trends, Masters Athletics has developed and diverged from the way in which the organization operates under its current Constitution. New challenges have arisen for its administration. The fundamental framework set by the Constitution should reflect this process.

Instead of introducing bits and pieces at every General Assembly, a global review has been undertaken with the following principles in mind:

- i. To allow for a more flexible reaction to current matters, the Executive branch is to be reorganized and empowered.
- ii. The legislative foundation of the Membership and the General Assembly remain largely untouched, but the Regions are given a constitutional status, with rights and duties.

- iii. A third branch, which is judicial in nature, is created as a fundamentally autonomous body.
- iv. A separate body is set up to distinguish medical authority from the executive branch.

Pursuant to these principles:

- i. All rules, regulations, and operational processes of WMA shall be contained in the By-Laws and fall under the authority of the Council and the, rather vague, category of Formal Policy is institutionalized as Decrees-in-Council.
- ii. Therefore, the provisions of the Constitution may be restricted to the fundamentals and conceivably valid for at least a decade.
- iii. Within the Council, a Board of the five elected individuals is formally introduced to undertake day-to-day management.
- iv. The Board is assisted by Committees, the role of which is defined in the Constitution.
- v. The Board is further assisted by Managers, who are in charge of implementing policies.
- vi. The power to sanction is transferred from the executive branch to a Judicial Panel, staffed with members who shall act as judges and shall have a degree in law. The Panel shall hear cases along strict guidelines while respecting the rights of the parties involved.
- vii. A Medical Panel will have its proceedings conducted in strict medical confidence, by members having a degree in medicine, biology or equivalent.
- viii. The Chair of each Panel are to be appointed by the Council with the remaining members co-opted by current Panel members, which was a midway solution between an election by the General Assembly and an appointment by the Council.
- ix. The Council still has the ability to conciliate a claim during the pendency of a matter before the Judicial Panel.
- x. A number of editorial and minor substantial modifications are introduced.
- xi. The structure of the Constitution is reordered to better show its structure within parliamentary democracy.

Commentary of Articles

Art 2 Purposes: the former paragraph (vi) is deleted on the ground that it is legally not permitted; its substance is contained in the new paragraph (d).

Art 3 Structure: the new structure of the Constitution requires a summary without a change in substance.

Art 4 Regulatory Framework: is a compilation of provisions from various former articles.

Art 6 Membership: WMA will follow the political decision by WA of recognizing a Country.

Former Art 7.5 and 8 Information: are deleted as administrative matters are no longer handled under the Constitution.

Art 10-12 Regions: the Articles are self-explanatory regarding the status of the Regions under the authority of WMA.

Art 16 General Assembly: the General Assembly no longer adopts By-Laws but shall appoint financial auditors, upon the proposal of Council,

Art 17 Powers of the Board: largely reflecting today's reality, part of the Powers currently listed for the Council are shifted to the Board.

Art 18 Committees: due to the creation of the Judicial Panel, the Law & Legislation Committee (now the Legal Committee) will no longer have judicial power. Its role will be to suggest and prepare By-Laws and Decrees-in-Council and enforce their compliance.

Art 22-27 Medical Panel and Judicial Panel: The power, composition and proceedings of the Medical Panel and Judicial Panel are set out in detail and are guided by professionalism and strict confidentiality.

The Council appoints the Chair. From there on, both Panels are autonomous in their decisions. They co-opt their members.

The scope of the Judicial Panel is designed to be separate from WMA itself. Any case involving Masters Athletics bodies is heard and ruled by the Judicial Panel, unifying the jurisdiction around the world, and setting a place for all the bodies within the realm of Masters Athletics to solve disputes.

Art 28-33 Conducting the General Assembly: apart from minor adaptations, nothing changes in the way a General Assembly is convened and conducted. It was determined that the members of the Board shall reflect diversity with respect to gender.

Art 34 Conducting other Meetings: to allow for more flexibility, the rules for conducting Board and Council meetings are set apart from the formal rules for the General Assembly.

Art 36-40 The Assignments of the Board Members: the Board assignments listed in the Constitution are reduced to the core tasks to leave more space for self-determination.

The President opened the discussion on the proposed amendment to the Constitution. She remarked that the document had already been reviewed and approved by the WMA Council, but now it must be approved by the General Assembly. She stated that the discussion happening today would save a lot of time in the future.

Manuel Cortés, Law and Legislation Manager and member of the updated Constitution document working group gave an introductory speech.

Ian Richards (GBR) stated that extracting what powers would be transferred from the Members to the WMA Council is difficult by reading the proposed document. Especially the part related to Rules of Competition in which the proposed update document Members will have no say on those changes. He thinks that Members should have the right to comment and express their opinions.

Therefore, he proposed an amending motion to section N, "General Matters":
Changes to Competition and Technical Rules may be submitted by Members to the Competition Committee for consideration. Changes proposed by the Committee shall be submitted to the Members. In both cases, the Committee shall consult the Members either during an in-person meeting at a WMAC Indoor or Outdoor Championships or via an electronic meeting scheduled by the Competition Committee.

Franz Kropik (AUT) stated that he was concerned about the risk of approving the proposed document after talking to Canadian and Australian delegates. He then spoke to the working group about those risks and what to do about them. He said that the new document is very much the same as the old one. They may look different, but they are practically the same. He expressed concern about the Legal Panel covering everything related to Masters worldwide. But by talking to Claude Hemmer, she gave him a solution to his concern. He finalized by giving his support to approve.

Claude Hemmer, WMA Chief of Staff, elaborated on Austria's delegate comments with a proposed change: The Judicial Panel is only authorized to hear complaints involving "Members and individuals associated with a Member after first seeking resolution through the judicial body of the Member, if available". The other proposed changes were discussed later.

Jill Taylor (AUS) read a message from the Australian Masters Athletics president stating that the proposed constitutional update should be deferred until the 2026 GA. He especially thinks introducing the Medical and Judicial Panels is unnecessary since the "Medical" and "Law and Legislation" Committees have been doing a great job.

The president spoke on behalf of the proposed updated Constitution, stating that 75% of the old Constitution is still there. She does not believe that the working group's work was rushed. She then opened the floor to the delegates' comments.

The assembly heard comments from several delegates in favor and against. Most of those comments were to defer the updated Constitution until the 2026 GA.

16:50 hrs. The president called for a 10-minute break.

17:00 hrs. The president moved the motion to defer the vote on the updated Constitution until the next General Assembly. (following the Australian proposal).

Australia seconded.

The motion was put to a vote. 27 in favor, 54 against, and 5 abstentions.

The motion failed.

Following the acceptance to continue with the vote to approve the updated Constitution, **the Assembly agreed**, by majority, to include the changes introduced by GBR and AUT in the updated Constitution endorsed by the Council. (Shown below)

1. Changes to Competition and Technical Rules may be submitted by Members to the Competition Committee for consideration. Changes proposed by the Committee shall be submitted to the Members. In both cases, the Committee shall consult the Members either during an in-person meeting at a WMA Indoor or Outdoor Championships or via an electronic meeting scheduled by the Competition Committee.
2. Add The Judicial Panel new Section 27(d): The Judicial Panel is only authorized to hear complaints involving Members and individuals associated with a Member after first seeking resolution through the judicial body of the Member, if available.
3. In Section 24 Medical Panel, substitute the first sentence in paragraph b) with "The Chair shall be appointed by the General Assembly on the proposal of the Council".

4. In Section 27 Judicial Panel, substitute the first sentence in paragraph b) with "The Chair shall be appointed by the General Assembly on the proposal of the Council".

The president moved the motion for approval of the updated Constitution. Adding a request for approval of the first appointment for the Chair of the Judicial Panel – Manuel Cortés, and the first appointment for the Chair of the Medical Panel – Steve Peters.

USA seconded.

The motion was put to a vote. 84 in favor, 10 against, and 1 abstention.

The motion was carried.

18. 17:20 hrs. MASL Hearing

The president contextualized this presentation by saying that in October 2022, the Council reinstated Sri Lanka Masters Athletics (SLMA) as the rightful WMA Member.

The floor was open to hearing the Masters Athletics Sri Lanka's (MASL) lawyer, who addressed the assembly and explained why they considered their WMA membership termination not legally done. The assembly carefully listened to the lawyer.

After her presentation, the MASL lawyer was instructed to leave the assembly for the delegates to vote.

The president moved the motion to confirm the Council's decision to reinstate SLMA as the rightful WMA Member in October 2022.

The motion was carried unanimously. MASL's lawyer was informed of the result.

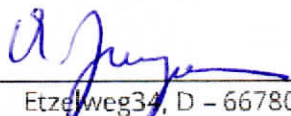
19. 17:30 hrs. Date of the next General Assembly

The president informed the delegates that the next General Assembly would occur on **26 August 2026 at the Daegu 2026 WMAC.**

20. 17:35 hrs. Closing of the General Assembly.

The president thanked all the present delegates for their hard work on this day and closed the assembly at **17:40 hrs.**

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WMA President



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