

HANDBALL
DESERVES
MORE



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“Gerd Butzeck is one of the most experienced and distinguished handball officials – with a global network and insights into our sport from the grassroots to the very top level. He has the necessary creative power to further professionalise the sport of handball.

With this proposal, we want to offer the international handball family an opportunity to help shape the global future of handball.”

Andreas Michelmann,
President of the German Handball Federation



MORE

GERD BUTZECK



my visions

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GERD BUTZECK (born 15 January 1959 in Solingen, Germany) has served as a handball player and coach, and became the youngest Bundesliga referee at the age of 27.

He left this position when he became the first professional team manager in German handball at TSV Milbertshofen in Munich from 1985 to 1987. He also managed the Soviet national teams from 1982 to 1992.

Later, Butzeck served as vice president of the Belarusian Handball Federation until 2002 and acted as the EHF delegate for Belarus in more than 300 international matches. In parallel, he worked as an agent for more than 300 handball players from all over the world. In addition, he was a trailblazer for the international development of beach handball.

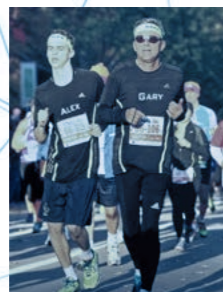
Since 2006, he has been the managing director of the former Group Club Handball and Forum Club Handball, which represents the interests of top international clubs.

From 2017 to 2021, he was a member of the EHF Executive Committee and chairman of the EHF Professional Handball Board.

Gerd Butzeck studied mathematics, education, and Russian in the USA, Moscow, and Germany. He lives in Wuppertal, speaks four languages, is married, and has two sons and a daughter.

In April 2025, the German Handball Federation (DHB) announced Butzeck's nomination as a candidate for the presidency of the International Handball Federation (IHF). The claim of his candidacy is simple and clear:

“Handball deserves more”.



Keep Handball at the Heart of the Olympic Games

1

Handball deserves to be an Olympic sport. All sportsmen/sportswomen like to be part of the Olympics and this is a major motivation. I can not imagine handball not being an Olympic sport.

In recent Olympic Games, handball has slipped from IOC sport categories A to E to category D.

Investments must be made in meeting the IOC criteria (e.g. athlete representation, anti-doping and ethics code, match-fixing regulations, development programs for the sport worldwide, communication and social media concept) in order to move up to at least category C in the short term.

In order to keep the status as an Olympic sport, IHF has to improve the level of handball in the other continents. And to organise the framework for nations outside Europe to be able to host World Championships.



keep it olympic

2



urban handball

Elevate Outdoor & Urban Handball to Expand our Global Reach

We need something similar for handball as basketball has with 3x3.

We need a new format to develop handball. And most likely we need a size of the court which is more suitable to reality.

40x20 metres are not available in many places of the world, but basketball courts are everywhere. So we need to make use of this fact. I think we have enough experts to develop such a format.

Beach handball offers the opportunity to be played worldwide in modified forms. Handball needs a form of the game that can be played 5x5 or 4x4 on all surfaces.

Playing according to beach handball rules is possible on sand, grass, hard courts and even street courts. In addition to two goals, only one area needs to be marked out.

3

Build a Transparent, Sustainable and Inclusive IHF Structure

In order to be able to work in a sustainable manner, the IHF needs to be reorganised in terms of its administrative office and commission structure and to increase the participation of all global stakeholders.

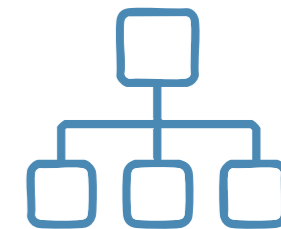
A separation between elected members and full-time operational office should be sought. The operational team must be expanded in all areas (organisation, development, competitions, communication, etc.).

Regular exchange and coordination processes within the commissions must be reintroduced. Ethical conduct is necessary to increase transparency.



Match-fixing regulations must be introduced and the anti-doping system must be strengthened.

The introduction of an age limit is advisable to limit terms of office for the IHF President and all elected bodies.



structures

4

think global



Take Handball Global – Beyond Europe

We need to work on globalisation. Handball needs to be extended on the courts outside Europe. We have to enable nations outside Europe to host world championships. We have to support them financially in order to make the next step in their development.

And I think that IHF can do that, and IHF should do that. Europe needs to be the motor for this development.

In order to develop handball as a global sport and support emerging handball federations, departments with full-time staff should be set up on all continents or even across all continents to advise and support federations in their development, manage cooperation between federations, create templates for coach and referee training, etc.



It is the job of the International Handball Federation to develop handball outside Europe. The International Handball Federation is organizing almost all major events in Europe.

5

Reward and Empower Grassroots Initiatives Worldwide

Grassroots are the most important aspect. This is the core, and federations must understand that we need to start as early as possible with kids playing handball.

Children as young as four, five, or six years old should play handball. The more grassroots sports we have in handball, the more handball we will have later when the players grow up and reach 20 or 25 years of age.

The best example is the Partille Cup in Sweden, where youth handball is played on 60 courts simultaneously. This is pure grassroots handball for me!

All development programs need to include grassroots handball to attract young people but also keep older people at handball. And bigger handball nations can liaise with emerging nations to support them by coaches' seminars or implementing a league structure.

Definitely, the revenue from World Championships need to be used and distributed to more development programs compared to the current status. Without an increased IHF funding, development is not possible.



grassroots worldwide

Invest Boldly in High-Potential, High-Growth Markets

The big future markets are those regions, where we need to establish/strengthen handball – major countries like China, India and the USA.

But first we have to identify more potential markets in all continents. IHF is making efforts to work on these markets, but I definitely believe that we have to intensify these efforts and we need to invest in these markets in order to get the place which handball deserves.



Looking upon the 2032 Brisbane Olympic Games, I believe that IHF has the task to support the country to develop two competitive Australian national teams for the Games.

Europe can be a partner in this question and IHF should invest severe amounts of money in this project. If handball doesn't perform in Australia, this will have an impact on handball globally.

new markets

Simplify the Rules and Make Handball Fan-Friendly

The basic rules are not difficult, but they can be challenging for new referees. A 500-page rule book is hard to understand. I believe the rules are too complex and need to be simplified.

I would like to make life easier for referees, for fans and for media by simplifying the rules and making handball more transparent, especially regarding passive play. I think the VAR is much better implemented in handball than in football.

In football I don't understand how the VAR is used. In handball, it is used better.



The only issue and difficult to understand for the spectators is the question when the VAR can be used. This needs to be explained properly to the audience.

simplify





Unlock the Potential of Super Globe and IHF Trophy – from New York to Sydney

The Super Globe is an excellent idea: a world club championship with teams from all continents.

I believe the event could gain even more impact if it were hosted in different regions each year. This would help promote handball in South America, Australia and North America – and bring the sport to new audiences.

My personal dream is to see the Super Globe played in Madison Square Garden, a stage handball truly deserves.



Currently, there is no Women's Super Globe.

Introducing it would significantly strengthen global women's handball.

Additionally, an expanded IHF Trophy for emerging nations would create continuous competition outside Europe.

My goal is to establish these competitions not only for junior but also for senior teams – for both men and women.

Super Globe



Integrity

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10

Protect the Integrity of Our Sport – Fight Against Match-Fixing

The best tool to combat match-fixing is the education of referees and players.

We need continuous education to prepare referees for the likelihood of attempts to manipulate match outcomes. They must be resilient to these approaches.

Education is the most important factor. Additionally, you need to use technology ensuring there is no match-fixing in handball.

Support for National Federations Without Full-Time Staff

Many smaller handball federations are limited in their development by the fact that they have no full-time staff, but are operated only by volunteers.

When elected, Gerd Butzeck personally will support all those federations with contacting the respective national sport ministries to fund full-paid positions at the federations – besides the IHF funding for emerging nations.

National Federations

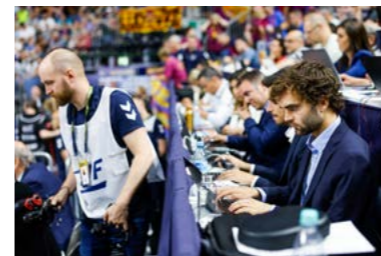




Bring IHF Communications and PR into the 21st Century

In order to communicate effectively with the member federations internally and with the media and partners externally – and to enhance the IHF’s public image among key stakeholders (including the IOC, sponsors, and media) – a dedicated communications team must be established.

Furthermore, the relevant channels in each territory, particularly social media, must be utilised to support the global development of handball.



communication

12

Innovate with Partners to Expand Global Media Coverage

It is highly important to partner with top broadcasters and rights holders to showcase the magic of live sports, but it is equally important to distribute highlight clips to a wider audience afterwards.

Agencies and broadcasters are key partners for handball, and the post-match distribution of clips is essential for the sport's development.

At present, I believe there is significant room for improvement. Therefore, we need to recruit experienced staff to produce and distribute such clips for different target groups and markets.



think global

13

Learn, Adapt and Grow from the Best in Other Sports

Handball can level up by adopting best practices from other sports.

For example, ice hockey demonstrates strong transparency when referees explain their decisions directly to the audience.

We can also learn from the NBA and NFL in terms of how they promote their sport and maintain a strong presence on all continents to drive global growth – through media visibility as well as by inspiring people to take up the sport.

We must adapt these principles to our own context.



learn from the best

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**Handball Deserves More –
In Many Ways!**

We need improved structure and governance within the IHF, a stronger global strategy, new disciplines to reach new regions, fan-friendly rules, and - most importantly - continued inclusion in the Olympic Games.

Dr. Gerd Butzeck,
running for President of
the International Handball
Federation IHF



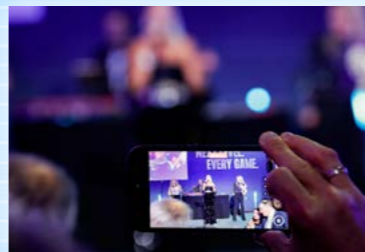
14

Implementation of AI-tools and Contemporary Technologies

The pace, the rules and our players are evolving.

The structural frame provided by IHF must do the same.

It should be a crucial goal to implement contemporary technologies and take best use of artificial intelligence to further develop IHF.



digital
innovation



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