

The FIVB History

The Founding

The first serious activity aimed at the founding of FIVB was an informal meeting held at the Graf Coffee House (now called Krivan) in Prague between representatives of the Polish, French, and Czech Volleyball Federations, followed by a more formal meeting in the council chambers of the Smichov brewery. The Czechoslovak delegation was headed by Mr Havel, President of the Federation, and composed of Messrs. Cebalka, Stolc, Pulkrat, Koutsky, and Vladimir Spirit. The French delegation was led by Paul Libaud, the newly elected President of the Federation, and included Messrs. Aujard and Babin. The Polish delegation included Mr. Wirszylo, President of the Polish Federation, and his colleague Mr. Szeremeta

This meeting started by the reading of written declarations of support which had been sent by the Federations of Italy, Yugoslavia, Rumania, and Belgium. It then proceeded to establish the so-called "autonomous volleyball commission" composed of the following members: Ronald Wirszylo (POL), president; Paul Libaud (FRA), vice-president; and Josef Cebalka (TCH), general secretary, together with a representative each from the Soviet Union, the USA, and Rumania. The assistant to the general secretary was Mr. Castellant (FRA). The main aim of this commission was to lay the foundations of an international volleyball federation, together with other tasks detailed in the minutes of this historical meeting: to give as much publicity as possible to volleyball in all countries; to create a unified set of rules of the game using as basis the American rules; the organization of some championships (European and World Championships) in Prague; the inclusion of volleyball into the programme of the Olympic Games; and the convening of a Constitutive Congress in Paris, to be held in 1947.

The organization of this first Constitutive Congress was entrusted to the President of the French Volleyball Federation, Paul Libaud. It took place in Paris from April 18 to 20, 1947, in the splendid rooms of the Grand Hotel with the participation of 14 Federations some of which had been delegated to act for other Federations as well.

The FIVB was born! It is certain that a decisive moment in the fascinating history of Volleyball's first hundred years was the founding of the FIVB (Fédération Internationale de Volleyball) when one day in April 1947 representatives of Belgium, Brazil, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, France, Netherlands, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, Uruguay, USA and Yugoslavia met in Paris to found the FIVB. Frenchman, Paul Libaud, president of the French Federation was elected first President of the FIVB. The headquarters were established in Paris, where they remained for the first 37 years until 1984.

The Beginning of World Championships

Aside from the formalities, the bases were laid for the future. The first World Championships were organised (1949 for men and 1952 for women) and have since remained the biggest event in Volleyball. The World competitions generated immediately enthusiasm, and the number of players and national federations affiliated with the FIVB grew by leaps and bound. The Volleyball fever had caught on just about everywhere and increased rapidly. FIVB promoted events began to multiply.

Olympic Games

Testifying to the prestige attained, in 1957 the IOC included Volleyball as a medals sport the Olympic Games. The game was played with 10 men's and 6 women's teams in the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, where Japan's women's team and the USSR men's team won the gold medals and consequently the Volleyball phenomenon started in Japan soon after the Games. The Beach Volleyball made its Olympic debuts in the 1996 Atlanta Games. Members rising

By 1955 the 14 founding federations had grown to 45. 1964 saw the explosion of 89 affiliates. In 1968, the national federations affiliated with the FIVB totalled 101, evenly distributed over the five continents: 25 in Europe, 25 in Asia, 25 in Africa, 11 in South America, and 15 in Norceca.

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In 2001 the Federation counts 218 affiliated federations.