



International **Quidditch** Association

Letter to the IQA Trustees

Dear IQA Board of Trustees,

The IQA Name Change Committee is writing to formally recommend a new name to the sport of “quidditch.” Below please find a brief explanation of our process and reasoning.

In considering the below recommendation we:

- Drew upon our past experiences and knowledge
- Formally and informally surveyed NGB representatives
- Held conversations and reviewed feedback, including social media postings, from members of the community
- Reviewed materials previously prepared by others in the community and conversations with NGBs.

In summary, we believe that it is in the best interests of the IQA to change the name of the sport for the following reasons:

- US Quidditch and Major League Quidditch have already determined to make this change and it is important for the IQA and international bodies to be a part of the conversation;
- Member NGBs (as well as members of the community) seem to generally be in favor of a change, we suspect, for the reasons set forth below; however, we recognize that each NGB may have its own reasons for wanting a change or not that might be specific to its own national circumstances;
- A new name will open up additional opportunities for NGBs and other organizations to pursue partnerships that could provide financial and other resources (including expertise and partnerships that further the sport); and

- The name “quidditch” and its relationship to JK Rowling carries a stigma that no longer aligns with the mission and values of the IQA

Our Past Experience

As members of the committee, we have the following experiences which contributed to our viewpoint that the name should be changed:

- We have played at World Cups, Continental Games and for domestic championships;
- We have refereed at World Cups, Continental Games and domestic championships;
- We have volunteered for the IQA, NGBs and other-quidditch affiliated organizations, including the Quidditch Premier League and Major League Quidditch;
- We have founded and coached teams;
- We have run tournaments;
- We have started NGBs;
- We have founded media organizations covering quidditch;
- We have run national quidditch bodies ranging in size from single teams to 55 clubs across their respective country.

In short, we believe we have an incredible diversity of experiences in the quidditch community that makes us well-suited to evaluate this question from a variety of angles.

We believe from our personal perspective that it is in the best interests of the sport to embrace a new name that will bring further opportunities to NGBs, teams and players.

Feedback from NGBs and the Community

On January 18, 2022, the IQA released a survey to NGBs regarding a possible name change. Of the 24 respondents, 22 indicated that they wanted the IQA to be involved in the process of picking a new name for the sport now. Thus we believe there is a clear desire from NGBs for the IQA to involve itself in this project at this point in time.

Below we have included excerpts from certain NGBs (with minor clean-up/grammar edits), which are included anonymously.

“We are not in favour of a name change as of now but believe that it is inevitable once the USQ starts the process. In order to still have some power over the name change, we prefer to have the IQA be involved and work together with the USQ.”

“Since USQ and MLQ have already initiated a process regarding the name change, we believe it is in the best interest of the sport that a change happen consistently globally, and that the international representative of our sport be a part of spearheading this change in a consultative manner.”

“If the sport is to be renamed, it’s important for the IQA to be in on the process in order for us to find a name that most NGBs can see themselves in.”

“We think this decision is going to influence the future of the sport for every country and not only the US. Consequently it would be fair to involve our international organization to have a say in the process.”

“We view the name change of our sport as an inevitable topic that will affect us sooner or later. We see the IQA as a world-wide governing body responsible to take a part in such an important topic that will affect all NGBs.”

“The IQA is a connection point between all the NGBs, we believe that our sport will grow stronger if we stay connected and we move all together in front of this kind of big changes.”

“because it will affect all NGBs and it would be damaging to the sport if it was divided over the name in the future; the international community should be included in the process of name selection if possible”

“It’s a good thing, the sport is moving forward even if the change will not be easy.”

“This needs to be a unified front and requires action from the IQA”

“We will have a harder time to recruit players as the name is what gives us publicity in newspapers etc. For comparison, there are not nearly as many articles being written about sports of similar sizes as quidditch.”

On February 24, 2022, we released an informal poll of NGBs on Slack asking for their opinion on whether the name “quidditch” should be changed. Six NGBs responded that it should be changed, three indicated that it should not be changed and one abstained. There was a general breakdown with larger NGBs supporting a change and smaller NGBs being more hesitant to change. However, as evidenced above by the responses to the more formal survey, it appears that a number of NGBs may not have wanted there to be a change, but, given that USQ has already begun instituting the change, support the IQA being a part of that process.

The international community has responded with mixed feelings to the initial announcement regarding a name change and conversations in the following weeks. Concerns among those in the community largely mirror those expressed by some of the NGBs that it might hurt recruitment and that the sport might be perceived as more serious. Others view these same concerns as positives in that they might open up additional revenue streams and attract more serious athletes.

Below are representative comments from members of the community provided in quidditch-specific Facebook groups.

From Quidditch Europe: "It was bound to happen and is a step in the right direction. My main worry is that the US is moving forward with such a profound step that affects us all without the rest of the world getting a say. Let's say the European community hates the new name the US chooses but we don't really have the choice to go our own way anymore. And that's not even touching on the trademark issue with USQ becoming the de facto governing body of the sports name."

From Quidditch: All the Regions - "I've come around on the name change from a couple years ago and I'm now a big supporter of it. First time I heard of the sport, I actively avoided quidditch on campus in college because of its association with HP even though I enjoyed the books. If Emerson's program at the time wasn't like 20% of the student body and if I wasn't constantly asked by friends to reconsider I probably wouldn't have joined. I'm a big old nerd, but there is definitely a threshold that's more a barrier than an attractor. 8 years later, now I'm an ast. coach, player, volunteer and I don't hesitate to say what I play (except for maybe around some older coworkers haha), but that definitely took a long time. I stuck with the sport not because of its IP but because I found a supportive sport community (one I hadn't had outside of XC growing up) , the friends I met playing, and my competitive desire to win/ get better. I love this sport and I'd be excited to see it not face the logistic challenges it faces due to the name in addition to staying true to the pillars of openness and acceptance that I think has been a big part of why I enjoy the community so much."

From Quidditch Oceania Region - "With the name change I really don't think quidditch will survive this I, at least the quidditch we know. One of the biggest hurdles around recruitment was always the running on broomsticks which always pushed away the people that take themselves a little too seriously and so we were able to fall back on the more muck around and light hearted aspect of the sport being based on a fictional movie where people flew on the brooms."

Overall, it seems that players and NGBs are largely in favor of moving forward but many are hesitant and apprehensive.

The IQA's Values

In addition, as part of the application process with respect to forming the IQA Name Change Committee we received the below message (which is cleaned up for formatting and to provide the author anonymity), which members of the committee found compelling and we think is important to consider in light of the IQA's mission "to lead and promote the sport of quidditch by holding international sporting events, supporting other quidditch groups and **by sharing quidditch and our values of gender equity and inclusivity with a broader** audience".

"The perceived link between JK Rowling and the sport is hurting us here given how frequently she's in the media. It's caused conflict both that she uses Harry Potter's continued popularity as proof her views are popular, and that her royalties from the franchise are now funneled into hate campaigns against trans people. Trans people in our community have mentioned considering leaving the sport because of this, and I know there's been at least some trouble convincing

LGBT people outside the sport that JK Rowling's values aren't reflective in any way of the sport. We've released statements and stress trans inclusion everywhere we can, but at this point I think the only way we're actually going to put distance between the sport and her views is by moving on from our Harry Potter origin.” - Anonymous NGB Volunteer

Future Opportunities

We have also reviewed materials made available to the board of US Quidditch, prepared by staff and volunteers of US Quidditch. In the interest of time, we leveraged the work done by this NGB who has considered substantially the same question.

The legal landscape surrounding use of “quidditch” is complex and has been discussed in various places over the years, we do not feel the need to revisit that history; however, the committee particularly found the below articles compelling:

<https://thequidditchpost.com/2017/11/19/you-dont-know-jack-alex-benepe-on-warner-bros-and-quidditch/>

We have anecdotally heard from multiple NGBs that they have received legal inquiries from Warner Brothers regarding their use of the name. While this is not a universal experience for member NGBs, we believe that this is a limiting factor on growth as NGBs, as they grow, have to constantly look over their shoulder. We also believe, that there is opportunity for large scale event sponsorship and additional revenue-generating activities that are currently foreclosed by a lack of name ownership. We have heard from many members that they are limited in activities based on a lack of financial resources and it is our belief and hope that a name change can generate additional revenue.

As vital as shifting away from the direct association with JK Rowling and the legal minefield with Warner Brothers' many trademarks, the advantage of introducing new revenue streams into the sport is also vital to our continued growth internationally.

USQ analyzed the top revenue sources of 12 US sport NGBs and found that, based upon their 2019 financial statements, approximately 30% of their revenues were derived from sources that have not been primarily used by USQ with the biggest source being “grants, contributions & fundraising events” which comprise 23% of revenues. While those NGBs may have resources independent of the naming making those revenue streams more available (in particular, length of existence and larger budgets), we believe that the name change would help to diversify revenue streams and open up avenues with media companies, equipment manufacturers and others looking for access to an appealing 18-29 demographic.

No longer having to consider the trademarks or potential ramifications of the name may allow NGBs, particularly those that are more established to:

- Sponsor teams directly

- Sponsor competitions directly
- Provide free services to their members or volunteers
- Host broadcast or streams on mainstream channels with financial backing
- Provide quality merchandise without naming or branding restrictions
- Ticket NGB or International events

While some of these activities are already happening, access to additional revenue streams could provide significant resources to NGBs. QuidditchUK for instance has never had more than £1000 in a single sponsorship. This is due to both size but also what other organizations are willing to risk giving a sport that is still legally tied to Warner Brothers.

Larger NGBs putting forward their national events to media, ticketing, or merchandise partners can (with proper planning and advice) expect revenues to substantially increase. While we certainly do not expect all NGBs to be in a position to reach this milestone, as the sport expands, we feel it is imperative to provide NGBs the opportunity to achieve this level of growth and to not stand in their way. Of course, we recognize that this may be detrimental to smaller NGBs; however, we believe that in order to further the growth of the sport, we must open up these opportunities for larger NGBs to pursue.

In addition to expanding possible revenue sources, removing the sport from the trademark constraints opens potential partnerships through both resourcing and support with other companies or non-profit organizations. This will allow NGBs to safely (and legally) enter into arrangements that save NGBs and their members financially by reducing the fees they have to charge to operate, or by having cheaper access to venues or platforms that provide further opportunities for the sport.

- Official partnerships with sporting venues and government organizations
- Official partnerships with equipment providers.
- Official partnerships with training providers, giving real qualifications for our medical or coaching staff
- Partnership with travel and accommodation sponsors

The word partnership comes up a lot here - That's because we believe that the focus should be on reducing costs to players and adding value to the sport, not just bringing in more cash. Building relationships with professional bodies legitimizes the sport more, and creates quality, expertise and access at the same time.

In conclusion, the IQA Name Change Committee is recommending that the sport of "quidditch" change its name in order to better align the branding with the values of the sport, the organization and its community and to create future opportunities for member NGBs and players. This decision is not made lightly, but we feel it is in the best interests of all stakeholders.