

Around the World

Namibia

ACF Congress Advances Sports Chiropractic in Africa

By Dr Brian Nook

The Third African Chiropractic Federation (ACF) Congress held in Windhoek, Namibia 3-4 June, 2016 was a truly historic event for sports chiropractic. In the presence of chiropractors from across Africa, including Botswana, Congo, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe:

- The Congress was opened by the Deputy Minister of National Service, Youth, Sport and Culture Ms Agnes Tjongarero who spoke of the importance of “including chiropractic services in the medical support team for our athletes...at all levels”. “I am here today,” she said, “to demonstrate the support of our Ministry.”
- The Secretary General and Press Relations Officer of the Namibian Boxing Federation attended the whole Congress, together with several Olympian boxers who volunteered and were assessed and treated as demonstration patients. This led to the Secretary General insisting that all NBF boxers will see sports chiropractors in the future, and all of the athletes that attended were then scheduled with local chiropractors.
- A marathon runner who had already qualified for the Rio Olympics attended for us - Dr Simon Lawson, President of Chiro Sport South Africa and me - to evaluate as part of the program. She and her coach were very appreciative, and she is continuing to be treated by a local chiropractor.
- A Namibian paralympian swimmer Gideon Nasilowski also attended for evaluation and treatment by Simon and me. As reported by Dr Richard Brown, WFC Secretary General on Facebook: “This is Gideon 'the Amphibian Namibian' Nasilowski, with Brian Nook and Simon Lawson here at the ACF Congress. Gideon and his twin brother were both born with Artholiposis Multicomplex Congenita, a disabling condition that causes widespread joint fibrosis and locking. Despite being told he would never even walk he now competes internationally for Namibia and is confident of making it to the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games to complete in the S3 class 50m Freestyle. Today he had his first experience of chiropractic assessment and adjustment and was hugely impressed by the immediate functional improvement. He now plans to integrate chiropractic into his health and fitness regime and wants it to be available for all Namibian Paralympians”.
- After an outstanding program the Congress formally concluded with remarks from the Vice President of the Namibian Olympic Commission, Adv. Jesse Schickerling, who said: "I can see from this Congress how chiropractic has huge potential to make a contribution to sport". He invited the sports chiropractors in Namibia to present a proposal for further cooperation to the Namibian Olympic Committee, and mentioned that his niece had recently qualified as a chiropractor in South Africa.

- Keynote speakers, Dr Brian Nook and Dr Simon Lawson, inspired all present with their lectures and practical sessions.
- Other speakers included Dr Richard Brown, who spoke of his sports chiropractic practice and experience during 27 years in practice, including participation in the host medical services at the 2012 London Olympics.

Main praise for this exceptional and multidisciplinary Congress, attended also by sports MDs and PTs and nutritionists, must go to Dr Elga Drews, President, Namibian Chiropractic Association, ably supported by Dr Darryl Oehley. It was Elga, a qualified and experienced sports chiropractor, who chose the sports chiropractic theme and persuaded senior athletes and officials to attend. In elections held at the Congress Elga was elected ACF President.

I would like to thank the FICS ExCo, Sports Chiropractic Australia, the Royal College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences (Canada) and the ACA Sports Council for the financial support that made my attendance possible. Similarly Dr Brown was supported by the World Federation of Chiropractic, and Dr Lawson by the Chiropractors' Association of South Africa. This was an excellent example of what can be achieved when there is strong leadership and we all then work together as a team.

I have only scratched the surface of what happened at this event, which I believe will prove invaluable for the development of sports chiropractic in Africa, a region, which is a key player in the IOC and the World of Sport.



Deputy Minister Agnes Tjongarero



NOC Vice President Jesse Schickerling



Dr Brian Nook (left) and Dr Simon Lawson with Gideon Nasilowski