

The origins and achievements of the WCSA – a brief history

The International Crossbow Shooting Union (IAU) was founded in 1956 originally for Match crossbow shooting with its roots coming from Switzerland. Match is conducted at pistol-type ranges at distances of 10 and 30m. The IAU established the Field Division rules in 1982 co-written by Chris Aston (GBR) and John Clark (AUS). Field crossbow shooting was conducted outdoors and the rules were more like Target archery. The new IAU Field Division soon outnumbered the Match Division but the Field Division federations only had 1 vote whereas the Match Division had 2 votes so it became very difficult to initiate change. There were also issues of age discrimination for Seniors, lack of recognition of disabled shooters, resistance towards Sport crossbow and aspirational membership of the GAISF (General Assembly of International Sporting Federations) apart from being an undemocratic organisation. Many IAU federations were concerned that their national funding was fundamentally dependent on membership of the GAISF or the Olympics. We also had some issues with the Field crossbow rules, particularly with regard to the Finals format.

As IAU Secretary with the late Tony Bradbury (GBR), Clive Barnett (AUS), Tony Kemp (NZL) and others, I tried to lobby the then IAU hierarchy for more autonomy for the Field Division, but in spite of all efforts the IAU continued to be a European centred body.

So out of total frustration we resolved to establish a new international body to concentrate on Target, Field (as in archery Field) and with both Target and Sport crossbows, but not Match. The formation meeting was held at St, Peter's School, Cambridge, New Zealand on 10 January 2003. The foundation federations were Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Great Britain, Ireland, New Zealand, Portugal and USA, closely followed by Belgium and Hong Kong. Some of these federations were also members of the IAU. The President was Tony Bradbury, Vice Presidents as Bill Pimm (USA) and Henrique Godinho (POR) and later Helio Meca (POR), Secretary General as John Clark, Technical Officer as Keith Reynolds (GBR) with member of the Technical Committee as Tony Kemp (NZL), and Chairman of Judges as Clive Barnett (AUS).

The major achievements since foundation are:

- Incorporation
- Recognition of Seniors in teams
- Recognition of Assisted shooters
- Establishment of Target rules including separate Finals more in line with World Archery
- Establishment of Field (Forest, Bushland & 3D) crossbow rules based on World Archery
- Establishment of Sport crossbow rules
- Establishment of 25 cm target face diameter Indoor rules
- Establishment of Medieval crossbow rules
- Establishment of Bench/Prone shooting rules
- Establishment of Postal Championships for Indoor and Bench/Prone/Kneeling (Medieval)
- Creation of WCSA Star awards
- Establishment of website
- Formalisation of Policy and Procedures
- Establishment of Finance Director with membership responsibility
- Establishment of a Recorder position for records
- Establishment of a World Ranking System
- Pioneering work on crossbow shooting coaching and a Coaching Director
- Pioneering work regarding Momentum and ballistics
- Realisation that crossbow shooting was never going to be admitted to the Olympics or the GAISF
- Held the 1st World Crossbow Championship in 2003. The World Championships are held every two years in various locations around the world.
- Awarded Lifetime Official to Clive Barnett in 2013.
- Awarded Life Membership to John Clark in 2014.
- Updated the WCSA logo.