



**DELIVERING VALUE  
AND GROWTH FOR  
GLOBAL TABLE TENNIS**



**THOMAS WEIKERT**

**MANIFESTO FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE ITTF**

# PROFILE

## About Thomas Weikert

**Date of birth:** 15 November 1961

**Born:** Limburg, Germany

## Experience in Table Tennis and sports administration:

- President, ITTF (*September 2014 - Present*)
- Deputy President, ITTF (*2013 - 2014*)
- Executive Vice-President, ITTF (*2009 - 2013*)
- President, German Table Tennis Federation (DTTB) (*2005 - 2015*)
- Lawyer, DTTB (*2002 - 2005*)
- Chairman of the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB - National Olympic Committee) 'Team and Ball Sport' Working Group (*2009 - Present*)
- President of the DOSB Table Tennis Coaching Academy (*2008 - 2016*)
- Former Table Tennis Federal League (Bundesliga) player and currently plays for 'TTC 1947 Elz' in a regional league

## Professional career:

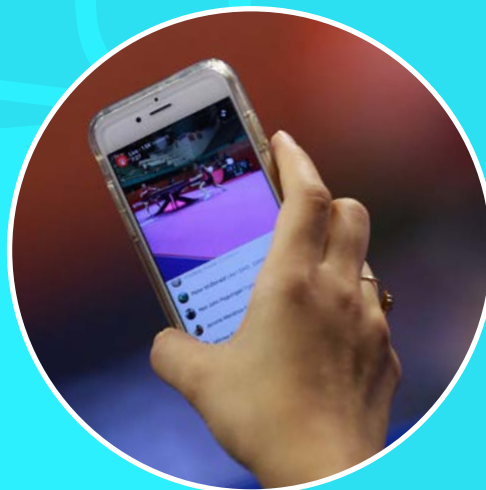
- Fully qualified and vastly experienced sports and family lawyer (*since 1991*)
- Law apprenticeship (*1988 - 1990*)
- Student of law in Gießen (*1982 - 1987*)



# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

## At the ITTF:

- Oversaw the acceptance of the final four National Association member applications – taking the total number to 226 and ensuring Table Tennis is truly global with every nation in the world represented by a National Association
- Significantly increased development investment, which led to a record number of coaches and umpires around the world
- Delivered a new 'Governance and Ethics Code' which was recently approved by the ITTF Executive Committee
- Strengthened and firmly applied ITTF's anti-doping practices and procedures
- Successfully signed Seamaster as title sponsor of the ITTF World Tour – one of the largest sponsorship deals in ITTF's history
- Ensured, for the first time ever, that a part of the ITTF World Tour sponsorship has been allocated to help develop the sport internationally
- Increased ITTF World Tour prize money to new, record-high levels
- Launched ITTF's new website
- Enhanced and promoted ITTF's social and digital media channels to exceed 1.8 million online fans – making the ITTF one of the top three most-followed International Federations
- Implemented communications strategies that saw the ITTF break Olympic Games TV viewing, digital and social media records at Rio 2016



## At the German Table Tennis Federation (DTTB):

- Increased overall revenue for the DTTB
- Directed the successful 2006 and 2012 World Table Tennis Championships, the 2009 European Championships, numerous World Cups and an annual World Tour event (the German Open) – all of which were well-managed and commercially successful
- Led the German team to medals at the Beijing 2008 and London 2012 Olympic Games
- Presided over a review of elite athlete performance and implemented changes which brought an unprecedented number of medals and international success
- Developed and implemented the anti-doping code of the DTTB
- Established successful Corporate Social Responsibility programmes, which have been active since 2006. These campaigns ensured regular funding was distributed from the DTTB to support ITTF development programmes and bilateral initiatives between Germany and African nations
- Oversaw the construction and expansion of the German Table Tennis Centre in Düsseldorf in 2006



# MY COMMITMENT TO YOU

## It has been my great honour and privilege to serve you as ITTF President since 2014.

In that time, I believe we, the global Table Tennis family, have achieved excellent success and it is my determined ambition to continue to create more players and fans and drive forward the development of the sport around the world.

As the current ITTF President, I would like to acknowledge and pay tribute to all the hard work undertaken over many years by each and every National Association to advance our sport. In addition, I would like to thank the great team of staff and volunteers at the ITTF who also work tirelessly to promote and develop Table Tennis globally. Without all this wonderful support, the ITTF and its continental and national bodies would not be in the healthy position we presently occupy and we would not be able to provide the tools and benefits to help our Table Tennis stakeholders grow further.

Above everything else, I am a Table Tennis fan and player and through my many years working in our great sport, I have dedicated my time and energy to ensuring Table Tennis has a prosperous present and future. Now, as a candidate standing for election as ITTF President in May, you have my absolute and unwavering commitment that I will carry out the pledges I make to guarantee the ITTF goes from strength to strength and that Table Tennis thrives for generations more.

I believe I am the right person to lead the ITTF at this crucial time and deliver great benefits to all National Associations because I proudly served as President of the German Table Tennis Federation for more than 10 years. With this track-record, I know the opportunities, challenges and the daily workings of a National Association. This invaluable experience leading a very successful Federation means I truly understand the support each Member needs to develop and succeed.

Now I am delighted to present to you my Manifesto for Presidency of the ITTF. This document expresses my unique vision and plans to consolidate the excellent work that has been achieved to date and details how I believe we can make Table Tennis reach even greater heights.

My Manifesto is also an opportunity to present myself to you and show my character, my values and illustrate the way I would lead the ITTF with integrity, transparency and dignity. If I have the honour of being elected President of the ITTF, my term in office would be guided by the principles of openness, collaboration and constructive dialogue.

With my record of more than 15 years leading National and International Table Tennis Associations, I will bring experience, credibility and an urgent sense of purpose to the ITTF at an important time for our sport. Also, with my professional background in sports law, I will be strategic, innovative and creative in order to deliver a bright

future for the ITTF and all National Associations. I recognise, however, this can only be achieved by working in close partnership with every Continental and National Association. I am committed to making sure this happens.

I am fully focused on the role of ITTF President and I will never be distracted from the key task of developing, promoting and protecting the interests of global Table Tennis. My objective is to deliver value to the National Associations – no matter their size, history or sporting record.

As someone who is dedicated to and has a core passion for Table Tennis, I believe I am the right person to guide the ITTF through the next stage of its global journey, unlock the immense potential of our sport, engage more players and fans and deliver powerful commercial and marketing benefits for the whole Table Tennis family – all conducted in the spirit of trust, optimism and sporting friendship.



# MY KEY MANIFESTO PILLARS

My campaign for ITTF presidency is defined by seven key pillars underpinned by a comprehensive series of proposals that will guide me, should I have the honour of being elected in May. I see myself as the 'evolutionary' candidate - someone who respects the rich traditions of our sport, but also has an eye on the future and embraces innovation and fresh thinking.

**01** Fuelling the development of Table Tennis and empowering all National Associations

**02** Setting the highest standards of governance, integrity and transparency

**03** Ensuring stability, continuity and positive Olympic/IOC relations

**04** Maximising commercial and marketing opportunities

**05** Enhancing the presentation of our sport

**06** Engaging our audiences digitally and attracting younger fans

**07** Developing Para Table Tennis

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# FUELLING THE DEVELOPMENT OF TABLE TENNIS AND EMPOWERING ALL NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

## I am immensely proud as President that the ITTF is the largest International Sports Federation with 222 National Associations.

It is a great responsibility and honour to lead the ITTF and serve all our Members so they can grow further and help Table Tennis prosper. I am delighted that we continue to approve and welcome new National Federations – therefore fulfilling my commitment to support the broader development of Table Tennis in every part of the world.

Most recently, it was wonderful that the ITTF Executive Committee decided to endorse four new Member applications from Bahamas, Cape Verde, Eritrea and Guinea-Bissau, which will be considered for acceptance at our AGM in May. Once the ITTF AGM accepts these four Members, every country in the world will be represented by a Table Tennis National Association – taking the total number to 226 and making Table Tennis the first sport to be truly global.

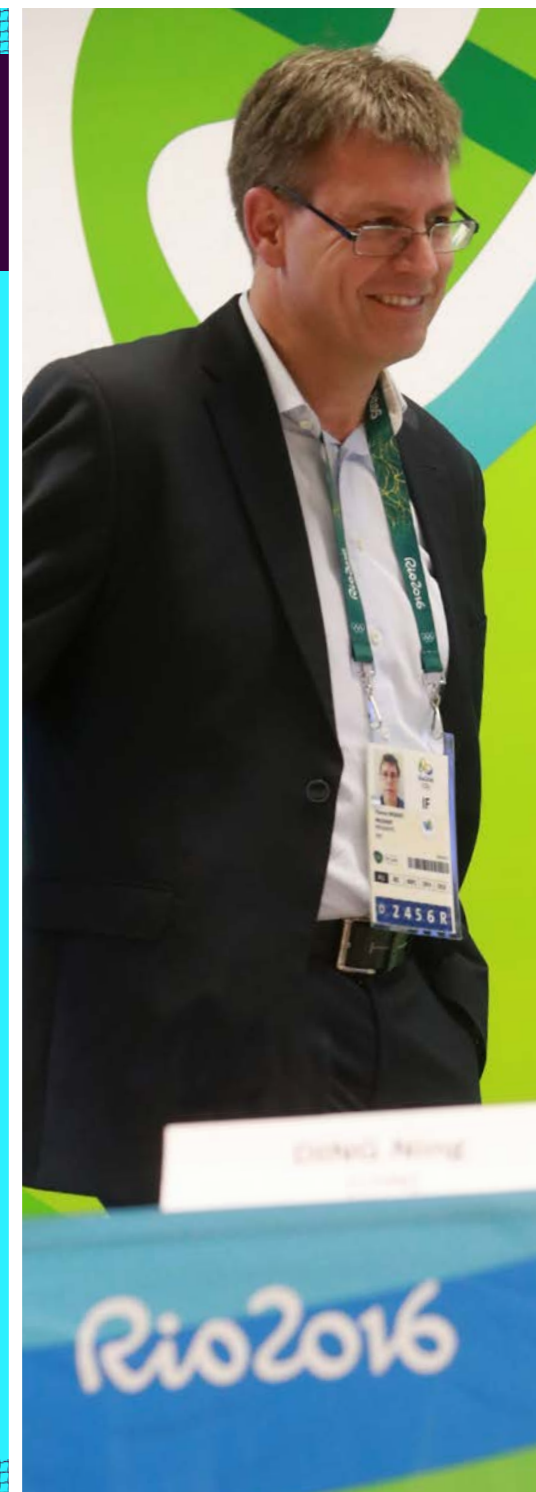
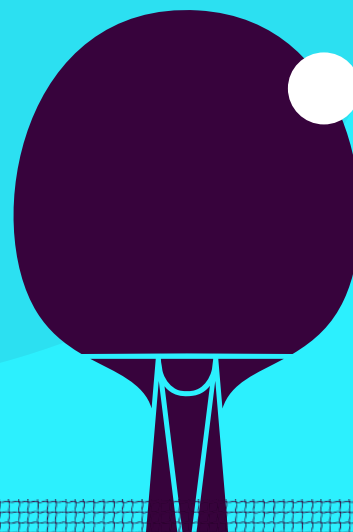
# 01

I want to see the continued growth of Table Tennis and, working closely with our Continental Federations and National Associations, I pledge to:

- Invest more human and financial resources in our successful programmes to help achieve even greater development goals
- Deliver targeted support through more equipment, better training and improved continental commercial agreements to help empower National Associations with limited resources
- Expand the group of leading Table Tennis nations so we continuously improve the quality and excitement of our elite competitions. I want to work closely with leading Table Tennis countries like China so collectively we can support the high-performance development of the sport in emerging nations – helping to ensure that more athletes from more National Associations compete for the top trophies and our events create more drama and global interest
- Continue with the programme I established to provide free Administration Manuals to help National Associations manage their organisation and operations

I believe Table Tennis has a thriving future and this confidence is based on the global spread of events on our international calendar. The ITTF World Tour, Challenge Tour and World Cups, as well as our regional projects, now involves all continents and we were treated to an exciting conclusion at the Seamaster Qatar 2016 Grand Finals in Doha. This was in addition to the other World Class events we saw in 2016.

The great diversity of locations and venues around the world showing the desire to host ITTF events highlights the strength of interest in the sport and the potential to accelerate growth to new territories. This year, we can look forward to an amazing new Seamaster 2017 ITTF World Tour and Challenge Series, which will provide a great competition platform for athletes around the world.



# SETTING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF GOVERNANCE, INTEGRITY AND TRANSPARENCY

**It is crucial that we continue to raise the image of Table Tennis around the world.**

If I am handed the Presidential mandate, I promise to ensure that the ITTF:

- Implements best practice in governance, integrity and transparency
- Applies the new 'Governance and Ethics Code' which was recently drafted and approved by the ITTF Executive Committee - helping to further raise integrity standards in Table Tennis globally
- Has all the tools necessary so we can win the fight against doping, corruption and all forms of manipulation in the sport, including attempts to abuse our sport for personal or business gain
- Rigorously enforces the WADA code to ensure that those who try to cheat our sport and the fans are caught
- Fully declares its revenues from marketing income so every National Association is aware of the funds in the ITTF accounts



## ENSURING STABILITY, CONTINUITY AND POSITIVE OLYMPIC/IOC RELATIONS

**My clear focus is to continue to deliver on the positive initiatives I have overseen and implemented to guarantee that the ITTF enjoys further success in the years ahead through stability and continuity.**

I will achieve this by:

- Delivering great value to Table Tennis and the ITTF through my strong relationship with Olympic leaders and stakeholders – helping to protect and enhance our Olympic status
- Building on the successful reclassification of our sport to Olympic Group C. Now I will work to secure up to three extra events at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games – enabling Table Tennis and the ITTF to further strengthen its Olympic standing
- Fostering closer relations with other successful International Federations to share knowledge, resources and best practice learnings



# 03



## MAXIMISING COMMERCIAL AND MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

**In 2016, I was delighted to deliver on a promise to repurchase the ITTF marketing rights from TMS which will generate more revenue for the ITTF and make us more financially accountable and transparent as an International Federation.**

This was a very important and strategic move that I forged ahead with because it was essential to:

- Create new, flexible and independently agreed sponsorship marketing partnerships that deliver greater commercial value – funds that provide Continental and National Associations with improved investment to develop Table Tennis and achieve the strategic missions stated in this Manifesto
- Build-up a high calibre, small and commercially-astute ITTF marketing team to optimise revenue streams

- Focus our marketing and commercial programmes to specifically engage young people by maximising Table Tennis exposure on youth-orientated platforms and channels
- Guarantee that the marketing revenue coming into the ITTF and distributed to Continental and National Associations is fully accounted for – ensuring maximum possible funds for ITTF Members around the world

The ITTF and Table Tennis events are already experiencing the benefits of these new strategies as we were proud to announce Seamaster as the new sponsor of the World Tour. We are now on track to form new sponsorships which will increase funding and create further value for Continental and National Associations to grow and develop Table Tennis around the world.

I also have concrete plans to initiate further marketing and promotion courses for National Associations, so all Members can enhance their communications with key audiences.

# 04



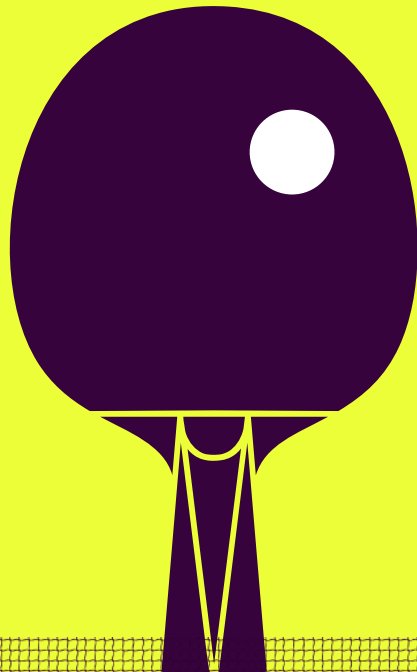
## ENHANCING THE PRESENTATION OF OUR SPORT

**I strongly believe we need to innovate in the way we project and present our sport to the world – both in venue and on screen. Together, we can achieve this goal by:**

- Making the Table Tennis arena experience as fun and as enjoyable as possible – not just for core fans of the sport, but for those who are new to our game. We need to think about how we entertain, excite and inspire the crowds – especially young people – by creating a full 'entertainment experience' where fast-paced Table Tennis action blends perfectly with music, light and dance to deliver an enthralling showpiece
- Further developing the new TTX format so we have a different version of the sport that is even more fun, entertaining, easy to understand and follow. Crucially, this will be a way to connect and appeal to younger fans to inspire them to take up the sport. It was also an achievement that we negotiated the opportunity to showcase the new Table Tennis lifestyle event, 'TTX – Anytime – Anywhere – Anyhow' at the Olympic Games in Rio. This showcase received positive promotional coverage and attention during the Games and it is important we continue to invest in this product and generate more momentum

- Developing and embracing new broadcast technologies to allow our fans to be closer to the sport. We employed the latest virtual reality systems at the World Tour Grand Finals and I believe new innovations like this will help us to increase the hours of television coverage, improve the popularity of Table Tennis and attract new viewers

We are a fast-paced, energetic and modern sport and our 'presentation brand' should reflect this – with the aim to attract more and younger spectators.



# 05



## ENGAGING OUR AUDIENCES DIGITALLY AND ATTRACTING YOUNGER FANS

**Last year I ensured key updates were made to improve the ITTF website and further enhancements are being implemented to offer fans of the sport an enriching online experience:**

- We have extended our digital reach and engagement with fans, and especially younger generations, through improved and more compelling content on the ITTF's social media channels – Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Weibo and WeChat
- Across all ITTF social media channels, we now have a community of more than 1.8 million fans – making ITTF one of the top three most-followed International Federations. This is a significant rise since 2014 and I am determined to see our online engagement with fans of Table Tennis improve and grow
- Importantly, ITTF's profile on the Chinese social media platform, Weibo, recently exceeded one million followers and the number of Table Tennis fans on the site is growing rapidly

- Table Tennis is now ranked in the top five Olympic sports for social media engagement, and third for Facebook engagement. At the historic Rio 2016 Olympic Games the cumulative global online audience for our events exceeded 552,300,000 viewers – a record for Table Tennis at the Games and an achievement we can all be proud of. I am fully committed to allocating more resources to ensure we continue to connect directly with our fans online
- By the time of our AGM, Table Tennis will be played in every nation in the world, and I want to ensure that everybody has the opportunity to watch the sport and ITTF events on TV, iTV and ITTF social media channels – helping us to develop interest in our sport further and connect Table Tennis to fans of all ages

# 06



## DEVELOPING PARA TABLE TENNIS

**I am committed to promoting inclusion and access to our sport in all its forms so, should I continue as ITTF President, I will also focus on the further development of Para Table Tennis.**

We were thrilled to host in 2016 a joint Para Table Tennis project with United Nations Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) in Nepal on World Table Tennis Day. All the stakeholders involved in this project hailed it a success and it promoted Para Table Tennis effectively to international audiences – resulting in a prestigious Peace and Sport Award.

I was extremely proud to watch all the amazing Table Tennis Paralympians making history and thrilling the world at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. With my pledge to continue developing Para Table Tennis, I will ensure that our wonderful sport is open and accessible to people with disabilities, and that the ITTF supports and promotes these remarkable and talented athletes on all media platforms.

# 07



# MY OVERRIDING PLEDGE

## This Manifesto sets out my blueprint for the future development of the ITTF and global Table Tennis.

I believe it builds on the achievements that have been accomplished in my first term in office as ITTF President and I am convinced that by working with this vision – in true partnership with Continental and National Associations – our sport will enter an exciting new phase of global growth.

I am confident that the ideas I have proposed here will bring great benefits to all Table Tennis stakeholders which will help our sport expand with more young people becoming athletes, more people watching and consuming our sport and greater revenues flowing into the Table Tennis family.

I very much hope – from the way I have led the ITTF since 2014 and the results that have been achieved – that you feel I am the right person to help steer our sport and organisation into an even greater era that maximises opportunities, harnesses the latest innovations and technologies and confirms Table Tennis as the sport that sets the benchmark for good governance, integrity and transparency.

I have built a strong team politically and professionally at the ITTF and with the right approach, we can make Table Tennis even more global and successful – with greater commercial success and increased revenues across the world. I know I possess the drive, international experience, energy and skills to deliver on my promises and generate value for your Associations.

I look forward to the opportunity to discuss my vision and plans in greater detail and talk through my Manifesto over the coming weeks. As a sport, we have much to celebrate but also a lot of hard work to do to ensure we remain on the right path to achieve great results. As always, my door is open to you and I welcome any comments or questions that you may have.

This is a Manifesto for all of us and by working in a spirit of true collaboration with our Continental and National Associations, I know we can unlock our great potential and secure an even brighter future for global Table Tennis. If I have the honour of continuing as President, I will invest all my energies into making this happen and taking our sport to the next level of international success.

I look forward to welcoming you all to the Liebherr 2017 World Table Tennis Championships in my home country Germany!



**Thomas Weikert**  
President, ITTF

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