

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF POKER PRESS RELEASE

29 April 2010

IFP succeeds in having poker recognized as a mind sport
IFP President Anthony Holden hails major milestone for the game
Poker now in World Mind Sports Games alongside 2012 London Olympics
Doyle Brunson, the godfather of poker, congratulates IFP

On its first birthday exactly one year to the day after it was founded in Lausanne, Switzerland, on 29 April 2009 the International Federation of Poker (IFP) has today achieved its first major objective to have poker officially accepted as a mind-sport, on a par with chess and bridge.

Speaking in Dubai, where the decision has been taken at the annual congress of the International Mind Sports Association, IFP president Anthony Holden welcomed a major milestone in our campaign to have poker accepted throughout the world as a game of strategic skill.

Over time, this should help to free poker from much governmental interference and other such unnecessary restrictions all over the globe. Equally exciting, poker will now form part of IMSAs World Mind Sports Games, due to be held in the UK in 2012 alongside the London Olympics. Holden and his IFP colleagues have spent much of the past year working towards membership of the International Mind Sports Association (IMSA). Their efforts climaxed yesterday with a presentation to delegates at the IMSA annual meeting in Dubai. After further deliberations behind closed doors, IMSA President Jos Damiani emerged to announce the acceptance of IFP as a member.

IMSA member federations chess, bridge, draughts and Go are also members of SportAccord (formally GAISF, the General Association of International Sports Federations), the global organization with some 150 member Sports Federations. This weeks meetings at Dubais Atlantis resort were part of the SportAccord Congress and International Convention. Poker must also secure membership of SportAccord to maintain its IMSA status.

Anthony Holden and his IFP colleagues are also attending tomorrows SportAccord Congress in Dubai as Observers. They are lodging a formal application for membership, which IFP hopes to secure at SportAccords next annual meeting in London next year.

Speaking in Dubai, Holden said: Now it has secured IMSA membership, poker is officially designated a mind sport and IFP is eligible to become a

member of SportAccord. This will involve satisfying all the requirements to obtain formal membership at their 2011 Congress in London, Above all, we need to have a minimum of 40 member federations from at least three continents. We have already achieved more than 50 per cent of that target and, boosted by today's decision, we anticipate little difficulty in meeting this and the other requirements over the coming 12 months.

I know the whole poker world will now come behind our efforts, not least because it means that poker will be played in the World Mind Sports Games due to take place in the UK alongside the 2012 London Olympics.

(The International Olympic Committee (IOC) works in full cooperation with SportAccord and both the Summer and Winter Olympic sports federations organize their own annual meetings during the SportAccord International Convention.)

Doyle Brunson, poker's elder statesman, and a member of IFP's Advisory Board, warmly welcomed the news. The IFP deserves our thanks and congratulations. I believe that history will show this was a key moment for poker. All over the world the game has been faced with governmental controls and other obstacles. Yet it is obvious it calls for qualities and skills that go far beyond a capacity just to take a chance.

IMSA President Jose Damiani said: I am delighted to welcome the International Federation of Poker into membership of IMSA. Poker's participation alongside bridge, chess and other mind sports in the annual IMSA events will demonstrate to the world that poker is indeed a mind-sport of strategic skill.

Next year IFP will be launching poker's first annual world championships, both team and individual, as well as participation in regular IMSA events.