



## **Report of the FIL Development Program: 2021-2022 Season**

Submitted by FIL Development Director Fred Zimny

The FIL Development program is broad in scope and attempts to address the needs of developing nations for general class, junior, youth and brand new athletes. With the cancellation of the 2020-2021 season for Youth and Juniors due to covid, 2021-2022 was an opportunity for NFs, athletes and coaches to re-energize their passion for the sport of luge as they look forward to the YOG in 2024 and Milan/Cortina in 2026.

For the General Class it was business as usual on the WC circuit, and thanks to the FIL's covid protocols and health initiatives, the WC tour took place as scheduled with the main focus for all teams being the Olympic Games in Beijing.

Typically, the FIL Development Program attempts to assist developing NFs through the support application process which is used to request support for specific projects or needs. Programs that annually come under the umbrella of development include: the FIL Luge School, the Patenschaft program, track vouchers, FIL Group 1, FIL Group 2, race accommodation support, coaching, equipment and travel support. The FIL Development Program will continue to focus on where the need is greatest, that being developing nations without their own track and growth of the sport in traditional winter regions worldwide. The entire FIL Presidium and staff should be thanked for their unwavering support of athletes from NFs operating within the FIL Development Program. In particular, Vice President of Sport Claire DelNegro has been instrumental in helping guide improvements to the program as well as Executive Director Christoph Schweiger.

What follows is a general overview of the FIL Development Program from the 2021-2022 season:

### **FIL Luge School**

The FIL Luge School operates annually and is a weeklong introductory program for brand new athletes from developing nations. In 2021, the FIL submitted a grant request to the IOC via the Olympic Solidarity Program to fund the FIL Luge School. This request was approved and the FIL received US\$50,000 for the program. The School was first scheduled in Sigulda during its usual period in the early fall, but unfortunately had to be cancelled due to the global covid situation. It was then rescheduled for the end of the season after the Olympic Games, but regrettably, again had to be cancelled due to covid. It is believed that the IOC will permit this funding to be rolled over to the 2022-2023 season.

### **FIL Teams**

The FIL Teams, Group 1 and Group 2, are a corner stones of the entire FIL Development Program. For both groups the FIL provides coaches, equipment and transportation and includes weeks that are fully funded for both track fees and/or accommodations. In addition to the traditional winter training camps, summer camps in Smerzovka, CZE and Karpacz, POL were also added to the FIL Group program in 2021.

	NFs	# athletes	M	F	Training weeks	Races	Total runs
Group 1	11	20	12	8	4	10	2355
Group 2	9	24	16	8	7	7	2304

### **Patenschaft Program**

The FIL provides financial support to larger nations who partner with smaller, developing nations and provide coaching and sled tuning assistance as well as other benefits. Athletes from the smaller nation train and travel with their host counterparts.

Host NFs	General Class	Juniors	Total
AUT	SWE 2	SWE 4	31
GER	ARG 1/POL 5/SUI 1	POL 5/SUI 1	
RUS	NED 2		
USA	AUS 1/JPN 1/SVK 4	SVK 4	

### **Vouchers**

Valued at €25 each, track vouchers provided by the FIL can be used at any track toward training costs. For the 2021-2022 season, the following allocations were made:

Participating NFs	Total Vouchers Allocated	Total Value
35	10,400	€ 260,000

### **Beijing Olympic Games**

Athletes from the FIL Group participating in the Beijing Winter Olympic Games:

Men	Women	Doubles	Team
6	4	1	1
BIH/BUL/CZE/GEO/GBR/JPN	CZE/IRL/MDA/TPE	CZE	CZE

### **Equipment and Material**

Development allocations were made to multiple NFs in 2021-2022 for various purposes related to athlete development and program growth. Support for the purchase of suit/shoe/glove sets was made available to teams in need as were helmets to all nations at no cost. Athletes participating with Group 1 & 2 were also offered a sled to use at no cost.

	NFs Receiving Development Allocations	Equipment Set Allocations
# of NFs	29	26 (70 sets – suits/shoes/gloves)

### **Coaching**

The greatest support the FIL provides in terms of coaching is the staff assigned to FIL Groups 1 & 2. The FIL funds 100% of the cost for 3 coaches at the junior level and 2 at the general class level for nations that do not have the resources to fund their own coaching staff.

FIL Group 1	Maciej Kurowski, Head Coach	Yuriy Hayduk, Assistant Coach
FIL Group 2	Petr Kinzel, Head Coach	Bogdan Macovei, Tomas Kinzel, Asst. Coaches

### **Physical Testing**

Beginning in 2020, the FIL implemented a new program of physical testing for all athletes participating with FIL Group 1 & 2. Using a battery of 7 tests, the goal is to test athletes a minimum of 3 times per year to ensure their physical training program is effective and preparing them for peak performance during the coming season. All athletes must achieve required minimum scores in order to participate with the FIL groups.

### **Race Accommodation Support**

The FIL provided €500 for each athlete at a WC and JWC event for up to 4 athletes per nation, plus an additional €1000 for nations participating in all disciplines at a competition.

### **Conclusion**

Though it is financially impossible to address all the needs of every nation, the FIL offers significant subsidies to all NFs to help reduce the cost of travel, training, equipment and accommodations, focusing especially on the needs of developing nations. Other targeted issues include:

- Increased summer camp scheduling.
- Increased accountability on the part of NFs on voucher usage and financial allocations.
- Higher quality equipment for experienced athletes participating in FIL Groups 1 & 2.
- Individualized year-round support and oversight of athlete training by the FIL coaches.