



Head shot of
Robert Fenton in suit and tie.

ROBERT FENTON'S CANDIDACY FOR VICE-PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL BLIND SPORTS FEDERATION (IBSA)

My name is Robert Fenton. My friends call me Bob. I seek your support for the positions of Vice-President and Secretary General of the International Blind Sports Federation, (IBSA). I am a husband, father of two children, lawyer for some 23 years, volunteer, advisor, leader and former Paralympic athlete in the sport of swimming. I have been totally blind since birth.

My life experiences and achievements to date are because of the assistance I have received from organizations like ours, and it is because of the impact this has had on my life that I want to help create opportunities for others. Without organizations such as IBSA, I would not be where I am today.



Photo of the Fenton family taken on
Canada's 150th Birthday, July 1, 2017.



Head shot of Robert Fenton in the Olympic Stadium at Seoul during the IBSA World Games 2015.

Why You Should Vote For me

A vote for me means that you value a candidate who is:

- Determined to promote an athlete-centered organization;
- Collaborative and inclusive in style;
- A consensus builder and fearless advocate for the best interests of the organization, its sports, its members, coaches, officials and its athletes;
- A leader who will ensure that decisions are based on sound research. Decisions will consider the ramifications for both the organization and the effects a decision may have on an individual or group of members. Decisions will account for changes in the social, political and sports environments in which decisions are made;
- A person who values and celebrates diversity of thought and different perspectives;
- A strong and committed team member who will serve and move the organization's priorities forward by, among other things, building effective partnerships with IBSA's members;
- A person who will balance the needs of multiple stakeholders, and manage group and individual expectations;
- An effective, open communicator and good listener who expects transparency to be the standard of behaviour;
- A believer in ethically sound and drug free sport;
- Strongly committed to ensuring developing nations are supported.

What I Will Deliver

If elected Vice-President or as Secretary General, I hope to assist the organization in the following areas:

- Assisting IBSA's sports by providing overall political and strategic advice when required;
- Working with IBSA's sports, IBSA's classification experts, external researchers and IBSA's membership to develop a straightforward, ethical and properly administered sport specific classification system for each of IBSA's sports;
- Assisting IBSA's sports in obtaining funding to develop their sports in developing nations in Africa, Asia, Central America and South America;
- Keeping the membership informed on IBSA's financial status and on new developments related to IBSA's sports
- Acting on behalf of and attend events for the President as required; and
- Providing general advice on financial matters, membership relations and IBSA's operations.



Photo of Robert Fenton with his guide dog.

Who is Robert Fenton

My Involvement In Sports

Athlete: I competed for Canada as a swimmer in the 1984 International Games For the Disabled in Long Island, New York, the predecessor to the Paralympics, and in a number of North American athletics and goalball competitions.

Local Community: I have had extensive involvement throughout my adult life on boards of charities, sports organizations, advocacy groups, religious organizations;

which provide services to people who are blind and partially sighted. In these roles, I have managed budgets, staff teams, delivered programs and given strategic, governance and operational advice in high stress political, social, and economic environments.

National Community: I am a member of the Canadian Paralympic Committee Board of Directors and Chairperson of the Stakeholder Relations Committee. I was also President of the Canadian Blind Sports Association (Canada's IBSA member) for five years and its Sports Technical Director for an additional year. In addition, I am also a member of the National Board of Directors of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and a member of the Finance and Risk Management Committee.

International Community: As a member of IBSA's Executive Board for the past two years, I have made revisions to IBSA's Constitution for presentation to the General Assembly, attended the 2015 IBSA World Games and the 2015 Para PanAmerican Games, drafted IBSA's Bylaws, sat on one protest and three athlete eligibility panels, drafted campaign rules and motions for the upcoming IBSA General Assembly, provided general governance advice on an as-needed basis and assisted the organization in resolving a sensitive legal dispute.



Photo of Robert Fenton presenting medal at the swimming competition at the 2015 IBSA World Games.

My Legal Experience and How It Qualifies Me to Be Vice-President or Secretary General

For the past 17 years, I have held a high-profile position as a lawyer for the Calgary Police Service in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The work is rewarding and challenging. I handle political issues, community issues, employment matters, complex commercial agreements, litigation, human rights matters and mediations. Public scrutiny is part of our daily life. Calgary is a multi-cultural city. I work with individuals from as many as 70 different cultural and religious groups on a regular basis.

I have also worked for eight years in a large international law firm. In my professional life and career endeavors I have become known as a trailblazer, being one of the first blind individuals in Canada to succeed in such institutions. I believe that my background and experience will qualify me to meet the challenges for all to prosper and succeed within our organization.

Being An Effective Team Member

As Vice-President and as Secretary General, it is very important to be an effective follower. The President, other members of the Executive Board, IBSA members, sport committee chairs and others all have unique skills in many instances, which should be used to achieve our goals. I would follow the leadership of the President and encourage the organization to draw on the expertise of others inside and outside the federation and enthusiastically take on a support role on teams led by others to move a project forward.



Photo of Robert Fenton presenting men's goalball medals to Lithuania, China, and Sweden at the 2015 IBSA World Games.

Conclusion

IBSA is an organization that has immense power to achieve social change and to provide athletes who are blind and partially sighted to succeed both in sports and later in life. It also has a tremendous opportunity to educate people who are sighted about the capabilities of people who are blind and partially sighted. I believe I have the qualities and skills to take IBSA further down these roads. It is only through the greater promotion of blind sports generally and IBSA sports specifically that we will ensure IBSA will maintain its strong position in the Paralympic Movement.

I believe that my skills and past experience fit both of the positions for which I am running. I very much look forward to working with all of you, in either position.

I can be reached to discuss with you any aspect of my candidacy. Please feel free to contact me as follows:

C/O Canadian Blind Sports Association
175 - 5055 Joyce St
Vancouver BC
V5R 6B2
Tel: + 1-403-466-1352
e-mail: robert@canadianblindsports.ca

Thank you all for considering my candidacy. I look forward to seeing all of you in Romania.

Robert Fenton