

# WEC 2025 — Post-Tournament Evaluation

*Summary Report: What Went Well · What Went Wrong · Lessons Learned*

Dodgeball Belgium · Internal Document

April 2025

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## 1. Executive Summary

This report summarises the post-tournament debrief for the WEC dodgeball event hosted by Belgium. It covers the full event lifecycle — from early preparations through on-site execution to financial closure — and draws together the collective assessment of the organising team. The report is structured into three thematic areas: what went well, what went wrong, and the consolidated lessons learned for future events.

Overall, the event was considered a success. Belgium received strong positive recognition from participating nations, the venue drew widespread praise, and the tournament ran largely as planned. However, several structural gaps — in volunteer management, communication, livestream preparation, and financial advance management — were identified as areas requiring targeted improvement.

## 2. What Went Well

The following areas were highlighted as clear strengths during the debrief.

### 2.1 Planning & Organisation

<b>Early start</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tournament application documents and financial tracking were initiated early enough to avoid last-minute pressure.</li> <li>• The task planning document was a useful reference, particularly for managing referees and the livestream scope.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial tracking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The financial spreadsheet was set up early and maintained throughout the event.</li> <li>• Despite a complex income structure (subsidies, registrations, catering, hotel margins), the event ended without a deficit.</li> </ul>
<b>Venue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The venue received near-universal praise: generous space, good safety conditions, excellent ventilation and climate control.</li> <li>• High nets behind the courts effectively contained balls, reducing retriever burden.</li> <li>• Spectators found seating on the sides (near the poles) offered good sightlines despite limited bleacher capacity.</li> </ul>

### 2.2 Tournament Execution

<b>Ceremonies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening and closing ceremonies were intentionally short and focused, widely appreciated by players and staff.</li> <li>• Avoiding long ceremonial standing periods contributed to a positive atmosphere.</li> </ul>
<b>Incident handling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A serious disciplinary incident was resolved quickly and respectfully, earning explicit praise from at least one national delegation.</li> <li>• The approach — balancing fairness, proportionality, and speed — was considered exemplary by external observers.</li> </ul>
<b>Referee quality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall referee performance was considered strong given the volunteer context.</li> <li>• A large proportion of referees were experienced, with many having served as head refs at previous tournaments.</li> </ul>
<b>Livestream recovery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After a very difficult Day 1, livestream quality improved significantly on Days 2 and 3.</li> <li>• The root cause (camera factory-reset loop) was identified and resolved quickly on-site.</li> <li>• Multi-court streaming was made possible thanks to a key equipment contribution from a volunteer.</li> </ul>
<b>Manager feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lunch pre-order system was praised.</li> <li>• Smooth match transitions and the 3-day schedule (vs. 2 days) were positively received.</li> <li>• Belgium positioned itself strongly in the European dodgeball community.</li> </ul>

## 2.3 Community & Recognition

<b>External praise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Multiple countries provided positive feedback on the event's organisation and atmosphere.</li><li>• Recognition came specifically for fairness, speed of decision-making, and professional handling of sensitive situations.</li></ul>
<b>Volunteer initiative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Several volunteers proactively offered their skills (e.g. livestream support, commentary), enhancing the event quality.</li><li>• The core organising team carried a heavy load but delivered a high-quality event overall.</li></ul>

### 3. What Went Wrong

The following areas were identified as pain points or structural failures during the debrief.

#### 3.1 Preparation & Coordination

<p><b>Volunteer delegation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several registered volunteers received little to no tasks and remained underused throughout the event.</li> <li>• Some volunteers who dropped out did so late (around one month before the event), creating last-minute gaps.</li> <li>• The implicit assumption ('if I don't receive a task, I'm not needed') contributed to inaction.</li> <li>• Task ownership was unclear — ad hoc micro-tasks were assigned instead of end-to-end responsibilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communication overload</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too many overlapping communication groups were created (WhatsApp, Facebook, email), causing confusion about where information lived.</li> <li>• An old Facebook group was forgotten entirely.</li> <li>• Multiple WhatsApp groups with overlapping scope left participants uncertain about who knew what.</li> </ul>
<p><b>No coordination rhythm</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No fixed cadence of preparation meetings was in place.</li> <li>• An unequal workload distribution went undetected for too long, with one organiser carrying a disproportionate burden.</li> <li>• No systematic review of a shared task list occurred between organisers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sponsoring</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate sponsorship yielded zero results, despite a sponsor-dedicated website being published.</li> <li>• Major brands were already locked to top-performing teams.</li> <li>• No designated sponsor-hunter was assigned; outreach was left to individuals uncomfortable with sales conversations.</li> </ul>

#### 3.2 Livestream

<p><b>Late start</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical livestream preparation only began in February for a March event.</li> <li>• Equipment testing was not completed until the week of the tournament, causing high stress.</li> <li>• No clear decision-making authority was established early enough to cut through conflicting technical opinions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Day 1 failures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A camera adapter triggered a factory-reset loop, taking cameras offline every 5 minutes.</li> <li>• The issue was not detected during the test evening because a different equipment combination was used by chance.</li> <li>• The Day 1 experience was described by the streaming lead as extremely stressful and poorly received.</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Rules, Governance & EDF

<b>Disciplinary gaps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No clear written rule existed for sanctioning retrievers from a different team category (men/women/mixed).</li> <li>• Even experienced referees could not agree on the correct sanction, highlighting a significant rule gap.</li> <li>• EDF does not currently provide a consolidated guide for incident management or welfare violations.</li> </ul>
<b>MVP system confusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The raffle-based MVP selection method was not clearly communicated to teams or referees.</li> <li>• Many participants assumed the most-nominated player automatically won, creating confusion and dissatisfaction.</li> </ul>
<b>Referee allocation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Line-referee allocation was managed manually by the host with incomplete information.</li> <li>• EDF's team entry policies did not enforce minimum squad sizes capable of supplying refs/retrievers.</li> <li>• Some national teams with refereeing capacity were under-utilised due to the ad hoc system.</li> </ul>
<b>Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some supporting staff (commentators, EDF RRC members) were not offered accommodation and support despite significant contributions.</li> <li>• Costs for key EDF officials and mentors are expected to be carried by the host without structural arrangement or expectations.</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Financial & Logistics

<b>Personal cost advances</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant costs were personally advanced by individual organisers, which is not sustainable as a standard practice.</li> <li>• For large advances (e.g. accommodation blocks), organisational financial mechanisms should be in place.</li> </ul>
<b>Ball damage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of balls sustained valve damage during the event, rendering them unusable.</li> <li>• Compensation arrangements for the affected clubs required post-event negotiation.</li> </ul>

## 4. Lessons Learned & Recommendations

The following recommendations are drawn from the debrief and should be applied to future major events, including World Cup preparation.

### 4.1 Organisation & Planning

<b>Delegate end-to-end</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign full responsibilities (not micro-tasks) to specific individuals for each domain.</li> <li>• Make explicit that no action from a volunteer means they are available — not that they are unneeded.</li> <li>• Focus appreciation and future opportunities on reliable contributors rather than penalising weaker ones.</li> </ul>
<b>Monthly check-ins</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule short monthly coordination meetings (15–20 min) starting at least 6 months before a major event.</li> <li>• Use these to review a shared task list, surface bottlenecks, and redistribute workload visibly.</li> </ul>
<b>Simplify communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit groups to one per domain (e.g. general, refs, livestream, managers).</li> <li>• Shut down legacy groups at the start of each new event cycle.</li> <li>• Ensure a consistent reply-all convention to avoid information silos.</li> </ul>
<b>Sponsoring approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target smaller, local companies rather than large brands already committed to top teams.</li> <li>• Designate a specific sponsor-hunter role with a clear brief and timeline.</li> <li>• Use post-event media coverage as a portfolio for WC sponsor outreach.</li> </ul>

### 4.2 Livestream

<b>Start 4–5 months early</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For a March event, livestream planning should begin no later than November.</li> <li>• Designate a streaming lead and give them clear decision authority early in the process.</li> </ul>
<b>Test all combinations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test every camera + adapter + cable combination under realistic streaming conditions.</li> <li>• Always include batteries as backup to prevent power interruptions from triggering resets.</li> <li>• Do not rely on advice from other countries without local validation — conditions vary.</li> </ul>
<b>Document the setup</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce a short technical note (hardware list, settings, lessons) to be published alongside the post-mortem.</li> <li>• Advocate for EDF to compile a shared livestream guide across all host nations.</li> </ul>

### 4.3 Rules, Governance & EDF Engagement

<b>Push for clear rules</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit the retriever incident as a formal case to EDF, requesting written policies on retriever status, cross-team sanctioning, and welfare violations.</li> <li>• Propose a minimum squad size (e.g. 8 players) per team entry to ensure adequate refereeing and retrieval capacity.</li> </ul>
<b>MVP communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a raffle system is used, state this explicitly and publicly before the tournament begins.</li> <li>• Encourage EDF to standardise and communicate MVP selection methodology across all events.</li> </ul>
<b>EDF accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formally request that EDF produce an organiser's guide covering streaming, referee allocation, discipline, and logistics.</li> <li>• Push for structural cost coverage of EDF officials and mentors by EDF itself, not the host.</li> <li>• Use the positive WEC outcome as leverage to advocate for better proactive support in future.</li> </ul>

### 4.4 Financial & Documentation

<b>Financial structures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid relying on personal advances for large costs; establish organisational financial mechanisms (e.g. a pre-approved event float).</li> <li>• Build the financial tracking document at the same time as the event application.</li> <li>• Ensure all income and expense lines are closed before distributing a final report.</li> </ul>
<b>Publish a post-mortem</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a comprehensive, publicly accessible post-event report on the federation website.</li> <li>• Structure it clearly: what was done, what worked, what to do differently, concrete recommendations.</li> <li>• Share proactively with future host nations and clubs — do not leave it buried in a shared drive.</li> </ul>
<b>WC preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise training quality and realism over session length, based on player feedback.</li> <li>• Explore joint training weekends with neighbouring nations (France, Netherlands, Luxembourg).</li> <li>• Allow adequate time after coach selection (post-April 12) for detailed WC planning.</li> </ul>

*End of Report*

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