OCEANIA WEIGHTLIFTING FEDERATION

ELEIKO **Newsletter** ELEIKO

May 2026

WHAT A SPECTACLE THE UNIVERSAL CUP TURNED OUT TO BE.

Huge crowds, six world youth records, junior world record attempt, Commonwealth and Oceania records broken, massive television coverage, international webcast, most important – Government support.

This newsletter will be set up in two parts. The first one will be the structure of the Universal Cup, whilst the second one will be the performances of the athletes. And the winners!

A Historic Milestone for Oceania Weightlifting. On 1 October 2025, Samoa delivered a compelling PowerPoint presentation to the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) outlining its proposal to host the World Cup. The bid was met with overwhelming support and was unanimously accepted. In the months that followed, the event evolved in scope and ambition, ultimately being rebranded as the U**niversal Cup** — a name reflecting its global reach and inclusive spirit.






Shots from the Power point presentation by Jerry Wallwork to the IWF Executive Board on October 1st 2025



La'aulialemalietoa Leuatea Polataivao Schmidt
Prime Minister of Samoa

The championship was scheduled for April 25th to May 1st 2026, marking one of the most significant sporting events ever hosted in Samoa.

The **Government of Samoa** under the leadership of La'aulialemalietoa Leuatea Polataivao Schmidt (Prime Minister of Samoa) provided full backing to the Samoa Weightlifting Federation, including substantial financial support to ensure the success of the event. In addition, the tournament secured a major partnership with **IBFC**, who proudly assumed the **naming rights** for the Universal Cup.

A tremendous amount of groundwork was led by Jerry Wallwork the President of Samoa Weightlifting and President of the Samoa national Olympic Committee, who oversaw the establishment of a comprehensive Organising Committee. More than 150 dedicated personnel contributed across logistics, operations, protocol, ceremonies, media, and technical delivery — a testament to Samoa's commitment to excellence.

IBFC came on board on the month of March 2026 and agreed to become the major sponsor of the Universal Cup and also assume the naming rights of the tournament. In attendance at the launch, held at the Samoa National Olympic headquarters, were many Government officials including the Prime Minister of Samoa. A presentation of a large cheque was made to Jerry Wallwork, the President of Samoa Weightlifting and Chairman of the Organising Committee.







March 26th the launching of the IBFC as the major sponsor and naming rights for the Universal Weightlifting Cup

The Opening Ceremony was nothing short of magnificent. Audiences were treated to a vibrant showcase of **Samoan culture**, featuring traditional performances, music, and ceremonial elements that set the tone for a world-class event.

The Championships were officially declared open by the **Deputy Prime Minister of Samoa- Mulipola Anarosa Ale-Molio'o** whose presence underscored the national significance of the tournament. Also in attendance was The Head of State **His Highness Tuimaleali'ifano Va'aleto'a Sualauvi II**. Unfortunately, the IWF President, **Dr. Mohammed Jalood** and the OWF President Hon. Marcus Stephen were not in attendance due to their disruption of their flight from Brisbane to Samoa. They arrived the day after the opening ceremony.

The speakers at the Opening Ceremony.



The Deputy Prime Minister of Samoa Mulipola Anarosa Ale-Molio'o launches the Universal cup at the opening ceremony



Paul Coffa speaks on behalf of the IWF President Dr Mohammed Jalood



Tuaopepe Jerry Wallwork chairperson of the Organising committee speaks at the Opening.



The Deputy Prime Minister of Samoa with Paul Coffa and Jerry Wallwork at the Opening.



The Weightlifting stadium set up for the Opening Ceremony.



The crowd at the Opening Ceremony.

Some of the VIP's Guests attending the Opening….



The Head of State His Highness Tuimaleali'ifano Va'aleto'a Sualauvi II.



Tuaopepe Jerry Wallwork welcomes His Highness the Head of State.



Special guests Tom Liaw from Singapore and Dr. Saydev Yadav from India.



Dr Antonio Urso past Gen Secretary IWF with Sua Hellene Wallwork -Samoa, Dika Toua PNG, Della shaw -Elder -Fiji, and Paul Coffa



Papalii Sam Swann CEO -National Bank of Samoa with Travis Lamb- Samoa and PR China Ambassador H.E FEI MINGXING



Lilly Coffa with Travis Lamb at the Opening Ceremony.



Mr and Mrs Savanaia Cikamatana from Fiji.



Samoan Minister for Health Hon. Vaaaoao Alofipo and the Minister of Justice & Courts Administration the Hon . Fesola'i Apulu Tusiupu Tuigamala enjoying the Opening Cerenony.

Some of the Delegations arriving at the Opening Ceremony…



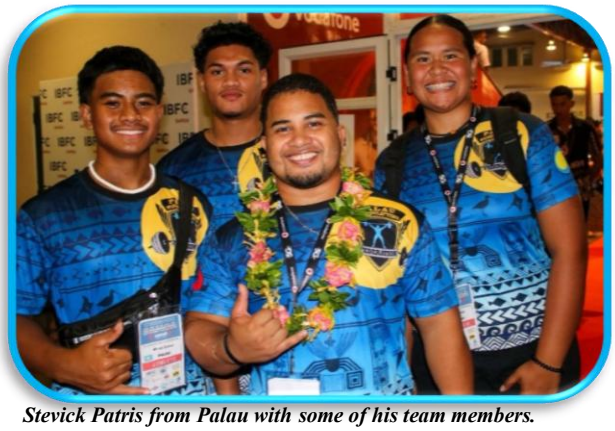
The large Nauruan team at the Opening



The Solomon Islands squad



Some of the Papua New Guinea team members at the Opening Ceremony



Stevick Patris from Palau with some of his team members.



Two Fijian young members at the opening



The legendary superstar Dika Toua looking for her 16th Oceania Title.



Some of the Philippines champions at the Opening.



Some of the Cook Islands delegation at the Opening Ceremony.



New Zealand stars at the Opening.



Ajah Pritchard-Lolo and Milah Dinh from Vanuatu with the the Deputy Prime Minister of Samoa



The brilliant medical team that spent five full days without a break standing by for any emergency.





Entertainment at the Opening Ceremony





Entertainment at the Opening Ceremony

Second newsletter will come out in the next few days with further details and pictures on the tournament.

Paul Coffa
OWF General Secretary