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Olympic Qualification on three continents and with wild cards?

The International Handball Federation (IHF) announced, that the three qualification tournaments for the Olympic Games are in future to be played across three continents. And the IHF thinks about introducing wild cards.

'We have to promote the game of handball across the globe and to demonstrate that we are not just an European sport', IHF-President Dr. Hassan Moustafa confirmed the decision to play the qualification tournaments on three continents on request of HANDBALL TIME. Up to now especially the teams from Panamerica had to travel long distances. 'That is not fair', Moustafa declared. The European Handball Federation (EHF) did object to Moustafa's idea. But Moustafa has the backing of the IHF Council that will decide on this.

Up to 2008 the tickets to the Olympic Games were given to the best teams of the World Championship and the best placed teams of the Continental Championships. In 2012 the IHF staged for the first time qualification tournaments, in 2016 they will do this before the Olympic Games in Rio again. But there could be a difference. The IHF is - according to information of HANDBALL TIME - planning to offer wildcards.

'I want to first present to the IHF Council', said IHF-President Hassan Moustafa. The reason for introducing one or two wild cards for the Olympic qualification tournament was the downgrading of handball within the Olympic summer sports. 'Handball was only downgraded in the last ranking as the tv ratings from Germany were missing', so Moustafa.

Germany missed the qualification tournaments in 2012 because of bad results at the European and World Championships. This year they could miss the World Championships, after missing the European Championships in 2014 they have to play against Poland for the ticket to Qatar. The loser of this duel could be the first candidate for one of the wild cards - the TV ratings in Poland were recently also very high.

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