

June 23, 2023

## EG2023 Alejandro Blanco (COE): "European Games a historic moment for the growth of padel"

*"I believe that this is a historic moment for the padel growth."* The chat with the number one of the Iberian sport, **Spanish Olympic Committee President Alejandro Blanco Bravo** begins on the sidelines, at the Ksos in Krakow, while on the courts the thousands of colors of the jerseys of the National Teams of the 24 competing countries mingle in a veritable fresco.

Blanco continues in his reflection, *"Padel is the sport that has grown the most in recent years in terms of players and spectators, and to be here at the European Games is undoubtedly a great success."* If EG2023 represents a turning point in the relationship with the weights and measures of the world sports chessboard, the Mixed discipline shows how padel is a sport that knows how to look to the future while keeping in mind the dynamics of the amateur and social fabric, considering that the mixed double is a great classic of the sport. An aspect that rhymes with the breath of the five circle ambition, the Olympics. *"To have introduced Mixed in these European Games is a real step forward for the requirements of the Olympic movement. Padel is experiencing an exceptional moment, it is true, but I think that the best moment for the sport is yet to come, because we are facing a growth that shows no limits."*

Alejandro Blanco thus acknowledges the work of these last few years, *"I want to say to my friend Luigi Carraro that thanks to his work and that of the International Federation, padel has grown a lot and the future of this sport is not to be read in the short or medium-term goals, because it has to be projected in depth. We see this every day because people all over the world like the spectacle of padel and at the same time they like to play padel."*

EG2023 extols an aspect that the International Padel Federation has been working on continuously for some time now and that is team competitions, a particularly interesting avenue for the future: *"Without a doubt,"* is the thought of President Blanco, *"because in all sports the feeling towards the flag or jersey of one's country is very strong and full of emotion. Wearing a 'camiseta' of the national team is an achievement for every athlete. We Spaniards by the way, like the Italians and many others in the world, are particularly passionate in this respect, and I am not only referring to the athletes or the coaches and staff, but also to the people who love sports."*

Also with the number one Spanish sport, a reflection on the dream of becoming an Olympic sport: *"I believe that it is not important to get to a particular goal quickly, rather it is how and*

*with what path you get there. I speak from the experience we have lived and live in Spain where padel every day takes a step forward. And then we see a growth of the global movement, in terms of the number of masters, players, practitioners and amateurs. So, we must not think about the goal to be achieved but how we will do it step by step and this aspect will be fundamental to aspire to participate in the Olympics, always considering how padel is the sport that has grown the most and in the shortest time in recent years."*

Spain is the pole star of the world movement, a yardstick for other countries along with Argentina, and the question "When can we get to the level of the Spanish?" It is one of the most inflated during interviews. Blanco smiles, "For us it is a pride to be a benchmark in the sport, however, I emphasize how the aspect of growth is inherent in the strictest meaning of each discipline and the direct consequence of this aspect, is the changing gap that passes between athletes, teams, countries. We are faced with constant mutations in weights and gaps between countries because everyone grows, improves, progresses and in any case changes and this happens in Spain as well where we have to keep growing otherwise the others will catch up with us!"

Blanco opens up in a wide smile and being the sportsman that he is, he puts his being a sportsman ahead of everything: "It is true that it would not be good for us to be caught up with the other countries, but it would be very good for the global padel movement. On the other hand, the fluctuation of the technical level changes weights and measures all the time, because athletes, coaches, sportsmen or simple fans explore new methods of training, using video, analytical study, recordings, data, artificial intelligence. As I have already told FIP President Luigi Carraro and the president of our Federation Ramon Morcillo in padel the level is growing very much and very quickly."

The spectacle of the finals and semifinals in Krakow's Market Square, one of the most beautiful and historically rich in the world, will be an extraordinary spot for padel. "I haven't seen it yet but I was told by Luigi (Carraro ed.) that it will be a spectacle, I know the square well, it's beautiful," Blanco explains, "and we must never forget that sport is not only made by the athletes, who are a fundamental part of it anyway, but also everything around it contributes to creating extraordinary atmospheres. The more beautiful the place that hosts the event, the more attractive it becomes for the public" A path that padel is firmly on: "I think the padel movement is working in this direction and doing it very well. I feel like a great ambassador of padel because I believe in sport and bringing it to a Square like Krakow will not only provide great visibility but also enhance not only the live show but also the TV show."

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About the International Padel Federation (FIP) The International Padel Federation (FIP) is the world governing body of padel, whose goal is to promote all forms of padel worldwide with: 90 Countries, 64 National Federations, + 25 million active players and 500,000 Federated Players. The sport was created in Acapulco, Mexico, by Enrique Corcuera in 1969. It was 32 years later that the FIP was established in Madrid by the legal representatives of the Argentine Padel Association, the Spanish Padel Association and the Uruguayan Padel Association, by means of Public deeds signed before the Notary Mr. Javier Gaspar Alfaro, with the protocol number 2486. We want to bring the worldwide Padel family together into one community, and make Padel a sport that is recognised and played in all the countries of the World. [www.padelfip.com](http://www.padelfip.com)

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