

NORTH WEST COUNTIES SQUASH LEAGUE

MINUTES OF THE 49th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT WARRINGTON SPORTS CLUB ON THURSDAY 24th MAY 2007 AT 7.30 PM

Present: Graham Horrex	President
John Hugall	Chairman
Dave Goulden	General Secretary
Henry Stone	Honorary Legal Advisor & Treasurer
Andrew Nicheas	Vice President & Representing Cheshire
Bernie Gill	Chairman of Lancashire & Vice President
John Cunningham	1 st Division Rep & Vice President
Norman Astbury	Vice President
Ged Illot	Vice President
Joss Garvey	North West Referees Co-ordinator

Apologies were received from Vice Presidents: Norman Chatburn, Bob Ireland, Colin Cary, Bill Litteljohn, Andrew Beeston, Robin McIntosh, Phil Taylor, Ian Bradburn, Antony Fielden

The meeting was opened by the Chairman, who then introduced the personnel on the top table, the Vice Presidents present and that the Sponsors were unable to attend.

There were 30 clubs represented, during the evening.

1. Apologies for absence – received from 27 clubs.
2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 25th May 2006, which had been previously circulated to clubs, as well as being available on the website, were taken as read and approved by the meeting.
3. Matters Arising – There were no matters arising
4. Presentation of Accounts
The Honorary Treasurer, Henry Stone, presented the accounts to the meeting.
Income had increased by approx. £600 over previous years, at just over £15300, excluding the Sponsorship money.
Expenditure showed an approximate decrease of £3700 over the previous year, which had been higher due to the 50th Anniversary Dinner costs, and was very similar to expenditure in 2004/2005.
Stationery & Printing fees had increased by £1500 to £2000, since in the previous year(s), the majority of these costs had been paid by the sponsor.
Referee fees showed a significant increase over last year, which is thought to be due to timing of when referee fees are paid compared to the collection of the contributions from the 1st Division clubs.
The new computer and printer had been depreciated by £181, whilst promotional expenses, including the website, had increased by £370 over the previous year.
County grants had been decreased by £200 to £8000.
This all resulted in a profit of just over £1000 for the year.
The majority of sponsorship money, £4000, had been allocated to the clubs, which had made application for a junior grant.
The Treasurer thanked the auditor, Simon Westhead for auditing the accounts on our behalf.
Following the Treasurer's explanation of the Income & Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2006, acceptance of the Treasurer's report and figures were proposed, seconded and duly approved by the meeting. There were no questions on the accounts.
5. Re-application from associate members
Re-applications were approved by the meeting for Deeside, Glossop, New Mills, Saints and Tollgate.

6. Application from new clubs and additional teams
There were no new club applications at the time of the AGM.
It was known that there would additional team applications from a few clubs, but at this stage, the full extent will only be known at a later date.

7. Rule amendments
The following rule amendments were proposed by the General Secretary, on behalf of the Executive Committee, to the AGM

1. DIVISIONS, PROMOTIONS AND RELEGATIONS

1.1 There will, where possible, be one first Division, three second, six third, nine fourth, and sufficient fifth Divisions to accommodate existing teams and additional clubs and teams. Each division shall be divided into such sections as the Committee shall decide are appropriate and each section shall, **where possible**, contain fourteen (14) teams, each team containing five (5) players.
If there are insufficient teams to make up an appropriate number of sections in Division 5, then Divisions 4 and 5 may be combined.

Following explanation of the change and questions / comments from members present, the rule amendment was approved by the meeting.

6. MATCH WALK-OVERS

6.1 A walk over is defined as a fixture for which one side fails to raise more than two players.
6.2 In Divisions 1 and 2 walk-overs will not be allowed and any team failing to raise more than two players for any fixture will be relegated. In all other divisions (except the lowest division) a team conceding two or more walk-overs in a season will be relegated.
6.3 All the scores recorded in the matches of any team conceding one walkover in Divisions 1 and 2 or two or more walkovers in other divisions ~~shall~~ **may** be cancelled.

Following explanation of the change and questions / comments from members present, the rule amendment was approved by the meeting.

7. ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS

7.6 Add the following sentence at the end of rule 7.6:

This rule will not be applied to a club's lowest team where its application would mean that the team concerned **cannot raise five players.**

This is the wording that was previously in the handbook up to 1996/97. At the 1997 AGM, rule 7 was re-written and the wording was removed in the newly written rule.

Following explanation of the change and questions / comments from members present, the rule amendment was approved by the meeting.

7.7 Part 1

No player may play **for a team** in the last four league matches of a division or the play-offs for that division unless he or she has played in at least four league matches **for that team** in that division, or **for a team in** a lower division for **the same club**, earlier in the season.

This proposed rule amendment was withdrawn and not proposed to the meeting.

7.7 Part 2 - Add the following sentence at the end of the rule 7.7:

In extenuating circumstances the General Secretary, the Committee or any one of its sub-committees can permit a player who does not meet the above criteria to play for a club's lowest team during the last four matches of the season, provided that the club's playing order of merit is maintained in accordance with rule 4.1

Following explanation of the change and questions / comments from members present, the rule amendment was approved by the meeting.

8. Presentation of Plaques, Trophies & Shields

Unfortunately, the sponsors Abbey Drive Line and Powerplay Sports were unable to attend the AGM. The presentations of each sections winner's plaques and the overall division winners for Divisions 2 to 5 were made by the President and several of the Vice Presidents.

The President also presented the "Brian Rhodes Memorial Shield" to Division 1 winners Chester Rugby.

J Firth responded on behalf of the Division One Winners, Chester Rugby.

Chester Rugby 2 received the Division 2 shield and trophies,
Congleton 1 received the Divisions 3 shield and trophies,
South Shore 1 received the Division 4 shield and trophies and
Saints 2 received the Division 5 shield and trophies

as the overall winners of their division.

A special presentation was made to the retiring President, Graham Horrex, by the Charman, who detailed the significant contributions that the President had given to squash, not just in the North West Counties, over many years.

9. Election of Officers

President	-	B.Gill	Proposed: Stockport Seconded: Dragons Southport
Chairman	-	J.Hugall	Proposed: Sale Seconded: Warrington
Treasurer & Hon. Legal Advisor	-	H.Stone	Proposed: East Lancs Seconded: Chester Rugby

were elected unopposed.

Vice Presidents: All the current Vice Presidents plus new VP's Chris Boyes, Alan Edge, Roy Lomas, Henry Stone & David Goulden were proposed and accepted by the meeting.

10. Any Other Business

Restructuring

The General Secretary gave a review on why restructuring would be potentially necessary soon. There had been a steady decline in teams over the past few years, which, if it continued, could result in the loss of Division 5 under the current format, if restructuring did not take place. Without restructuring the amount of travelling for Division 5 players could be significantly higher than Division 4 and very similar to Division 3 teams. If Divisions 4 & 5 were combined, it could lead to a significant difference in standards between the top half and bottom half of a division, which could make it more difficult to introduce new players, particularly juniors, which may lead to a further decline.

Several comments / options were discussed, which included reducing the number of teams back to 12 per division. It may not be necessary for all division to reduce to 12 teams, particularly division 1 and possibly division 2, which could remain at 14 teams. One comment was that we had gone past the point on total team numbers, probably a few years ago, when league were increased to 14 teams to accommodate the boom years in squash during the mid 1980's. Some of the advantages of reducing to 12 teams, although it would lead to 4 less matches during the season, were that fixtures could be suspended for half terms and Easter, as well as allowing catch-up weeks for postponed matches. A further comment was that the lowest division could be reduced to a smaller number of teams, with the teams playing each other 3 or 4 times during the season. One disadvantage stated of this option is that teams may become bored with playing each other so many times.

A further option proposed that team numbers could be reduced to 4 players to allow clubs to enter more teams. The General Secretary commented that although this may be possible for some club, at other clubs, who are already operating at the maximum number of teams to available courts, then it could lead to less players playing team squash at those clubs, hence there was a balance which had to be taken into account.

To round up the discussion, the meeting were asked to go away and consider any potential options, feed them back to the General Secretary, so that proposals could be put forward at the Team Captains meeting in September 2007, for potential implementation in season 2008/2009.

Team Captains Meeting

The team captains meeting for 2007/2008 had provisionally been booked for Tuesday, 4th September 2007. (To be confirmed). League stationery will be handed out at this meeting and clubs should encourage team captains and/or club representatives to attend. The Chairman commented that at virtually every Disputes meeting in recent times, the team captain of the offending club had not attended the team captains meeting and, if they had, the incident could possibly have been avoided by his intervention, if he had known of his responsibilities.

The meeting was drawn to a close by the Chairman at 8.50pm, who thanked the Sponsors, Powerplay Sports for the past 4 years of sponsorship and Abbey Drive Line for their 1st year, the club representatives who had attended, Warrington Sports Club for the use of their premises and the Vice Presidents for attending.

Dave Goulden
General Secretary to the League