

NORTH WEST COUNTIES SQUASH LEAGUE

Minutes of the Team Captain's meeting held on Tuesday, 5th September 2006

The President, Graham Horrex, opened the meeting, welcoming those attending before handing the meeting over to the General Secretary, who offered the Chairman, John Hugall, apologies for being unable to attend the meeting due to holidays.

1. Team Captain's Responsibilities / Player / Spectator Behaviour

The General Secretary expressed the expectations of the NWCSL over team captain's responsibilities, offering no apologies for repeating the message that has been given at previous Team Captain meetings over the past few years.

Team Captains should attempt to diffuse potential conflicts before they become a problem. Clubs also have a responsibility in ensuring that problem players are dealt with appropriately if problems do occur. All Clubs know whom their problem players are and should be taking steps to ensure that problems do NOT occur, including appropriate internal disciplinary steps, if necessary.

The President also stated that the marker has a role to play in all this by correctly applying the disciplinary rules whenever necessary, which may include penalising players for both their conduct and the conduct of their spectators. Any marker, who correctly applies the rules, will always get the full backing of the Disputes/NWCSL Committees.

The Team Captain's other responsibilities including:

(i) ensuring all his team members are registered on the web site and that a new player is registered within 7 days of playing. The process of registering players is very simply, taking only a couple of minutes. If you don't have internet access, then either get someone else at the club to do it or let the General Secretary have the details.

(ii) scorecards are correctly filled in, with all required details, including start time. Team captains should present their scorecard to each other with all 5 player names entered, in order, before the start of the match.

(iii) scorecards are posted to the appropriate Divisional Rep., unless the scorecard is to be returned to the club for posting. In this case, the Club Rep., will be responsible for ensuring that scorecards are posted to the Divisional Reps every week or in accordance with the agreements made with the individual Divisional Reps.

2. Rules

There were no rule changes at the 2006 AGM, but the General Secretary reminded the meeting of the requirement to comply with the following rules:

Rule 5 Match Date Alterations

Both the Divisional Representative and General Secretary MUST be informed and agree to any match being postponed. All postponed matches MUST be played within 28 days of the original date of the match. Matches should only be postponed in extenuating circumstances, which does NOT include a team being unable to turn out its strongest side.

Rule 7 Eligibility of Players

Rule 7.1 Players MUST be registered, preferably before the match is played, or within 7 days.

Failure to register players may result in the team being penalised for effectively playing a player short.

Rule 7.6 Permission MUST be requested for players who have NOT played before the 31st December deadline. Permission will normally be granted for players, who played the previous season for the club, who have been out injured or unavailable due to business/personal reasons. All other cases are considered on an individual basis.

Rule 7.7 Players must have played 4 matches before the last 4 matches. Yet again last season, there were numerous occasions when clubs/teams failed to abide by this rule. Some club players have commented that this rule is in conflict with rule 4.1 over teams being selected in order of merit. The committee view is that rules cannot be read individually and should be read in total. If a player's club order of merit makes him/her ineligible in accordance with rule 7.7, then that player is NOT available for selection. It is, of course, the club's responsibility to manage this potential issue during the season. At previous AGMs, when proposed changes to this rule have been submitted, those AGMs have decided almost unanimously that they want to retain this rule in its current format.

Rule 9 Starting Times

The GS reminded the meeting of the need to ensure that 3 players should be present from both teams at the start time of 7.00pm. It is particularly important at clubs who only have 1 court available per team, to ensure late finishes are minimised. If you know that you may have a problem getting at least 3 players present at 7.00pm, then a courtesy phone call, as early as possible, may help to diffuse the situation.

3. England Squash Affiliation Fees

The President reminded Clubs that they **MUST** be in credit with their affiliation fees to England Squash before the season starts, in accordance with the NWCSL Constitution.

At this point, about 50% of clubs in Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside have still to pay fees.

All clubs should check with their relevant people that their affiliation fees have been paid.

He also reminded clubs that the Constitution allows for clubs/ teams to be penalised 5 points per match (/week) until the fees are paid.

4. Player Registrations / Web site / Inputting results

Clubs should ensure that **ALL NEW PLAYERS** are registered before the start of the season.

Existing players **DO NOT NEED TO BE REGISTERED AGAIN.**

If you have any players **TRANSFERRING** from other clubs, then inform the General Secretary of the players name, new and previous club and ID number, so that the player can be transferred and retain all their previous results on the system.

Inputting results – all results should be inputted on the web site (by the Clubs themselves) by Saturday evening following the Thursday night matches. Clubs can have more than one player entering their clubs results and it is recommended that each team has at least one player/person with access to input results. If any club team does **NOT** have anyone to input their results, then they **MUST POST** the scorecard to the Divisional Rep. immediately after the match.

5. Requirements for First Division teams / Universities

On behalf of John Cunningham, the General Secretary briefly told the meeting what he required from the first division team's representatives this season.

Teams should try to get their results entered on the web site themselves before 5.00pm on the Wednesday, following the previous nights match.

All first division players must be registered on the web site and a player registration form should be sent to him before they play. The form is available on the web site in both a PDF and on-line version.

If the first division team representative is different to the Club representative, then the appropriate form should be completed and returned to him.

He also needed either a fax or email of the Tuesday nights result by 5.00pm Wednesday, the following day, to ensure that the relevant press releases could be prepared.

Universities – John Cunningham would be looking after University teams in far as ensuring that matches postponed at the start of the season (and the start of the second half of the season) should be played within 28 days of the original date in accordance with Rule 5. There would be a responsibility on both teams to ensure that they applied with this requirement.

6. NWCSL 50th Anniversary

The General Secretary thanked all those present who had supported the 50th Anniversary Dinner at Lancashire Cricket Club last March.

7. Handbook

The handbook is almost ready for printing. It is hoped that they'll be ready for the start of the season or very soon after.

8. Sponsorship

This coming season, the League has co-sponsors with Powerplay Sports, who had generously sponsored the League for the past 3 years, and a new sponsor, Abbey Vehicle Solutions Ltd.

Both sponsorships would be in two parts, a fixed amount of money and a commissioned based element.

Powerplay Sports will pay the League a commission on all squash type sales made by clubs, individual players and North West coaches. They are also looking for agents to sell their goods, who will earn a generous commission on their sales. Anyone interested should either contact Powerplay Sports directly or through the General Secretary. Please ensure that Powerplay Sports know that you are a member of NWCSL.

Abbey Vehicle Solutions Ltd had prepared a statement, which the General Secretary read out to the meeting. Full details of the statement can be found on the website. Similarly, Abbey Vehicle Solutions Ltd will pay a commission to the NWCSL for every car sold through the website that's being set up, www.nwslcars.org.uk. There is potential for NWCSL members to save £1000s off manufacturer's list prices.

The League would ask all clubs and players to fully support the sponsors whenever possible. If successful, it will help to generate funds for the League to continue to support and help fund Junior Squash Developments within the NWCSL clubs.

9. Restructuring

The General Secretary raised the issue of the potential need to restructure the league pyramid system.

This season, there are fewer sections in Division 5 (Eight sections), than Division 4 (Nine sections).

Over the past few seasons, we have continually seen an overall reduction in the number of teams and if the decline continues, without any structuring, then Divisions 4 & 5 would eventually merge into one division with the loss of Division 5.

The General Secretary's view was that this would be counter-productive since it could make it more difficult to introduce new players / junior into the League system, as well as creating sections of 2 halves.

Although there are a number of options, which could be considered, a couple of options were highlighted to assist in promoting discussion at the meeting.

Both were based on reducing the number of teams in a section from 14 to 12. This could be implemented using either the current pyramid structure or by expanding it to reduce travelling in Division 2 & 3 sections. One reason for considering a reduction to 12 teams is that during the past 2 seasons, there are occasions when clubs have difficulties in turning out full teams, particular at school

half terms and towards the end of the season. A shorter season (22 instead of 26 weeks) would allow either later start to the season, an earlier finish or free weeks set aside for half terms.

Discussions ranged around whether the reduction in the number of teams per section could also be phased. Whether the 1st Division could be retained at 14 teams, if deemed preferable. If Division 2 is expanded to 4 sections, would this mean that 4 teams would be relegated from Division 1 or could play-offs be introduced? One member thought that any reduction in numbers was the wrong way of tackling the issue, particularly for the top divisions, but didn't offer any other solution to the problem at the bottom end of the leagues, apart from using the sponsorship money to promote and expand squash. Of course, all the sponsorship money over the past 3 seasons has gone to clubs who are trying to promote junior squash, which is the most likely area to promote increased longer term interests!

The reason for bring it to the meetings attention is that the General Secretary would like to give the League members one seasons notice of potential restructuring proposals to be put to the 2007 AGM for implementation in 2007/2008 season. These will be sent out with more details over the next few months for comment and fine-tuning.

10. Any Other Business

The General Secretary had received a recent communication over whether the 1st Division could/should consider moving to 11up, scoring every point. There were several reason suggests, like most tournaments/top players are use to playing 11 up and it may get more spectators attending matches since they're more exciting.

The current rules do NOT state what scoring system is to be used, but a decision on this issue would need a the majority of 1st Division clubs to agree and could only formally be proposed and voted on at an AGM or EGM.

There was also a question with regards to whether there were any thoughts on moving the 1st Division back to Thursday evenings. To date, there have been no proposal to move the 1st Division from a Tuesday and similarly, any change could only be formally dealt with at an AGM or EGM.

Divisional Representatives

Two changes only from last season:

Division 3 North West – Richard Craig

Division 4 West – Tony Sewell

Contact details can be found on website under League Information.

With there being no further business, the President wished all the clubs an enjoyable season and closed the meeting at approx. 8.35pm.

FOOTNOTE:

Following the meeting, a member asked what the League's committee view is on clubs that play team squads, which have two teams in the same section of a Division, where the top players in the lower squad are considered to be stronger than the bottom players in the higher squad. Is this considered to be a contravention of Rule 4.1, on club players order of merit?

If such an occurrence would brought to the attention of the Disputes Committee, then it would have to rule on each individual case based on its merits.