

## **East of Scotland Squash Association - Minutes of 34<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting at Colinton Castle Sports Club, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

**Present :** Eric Donohoe (Chairman & Royal Bank of Scotland), Dave Ireson (Treasurer & Tyne), Ron Pearman (League Secretary & Tyne), David Ferguson (Secretary & Waverley), John Bain (Junior Convener & Grange), Yvonne Ferguson (Committee member & Waverley), Richard McIntosh (Committee member & Watsonians), George Mieras, Archie McCue, Gary Speirs, Richard MacBride (Colinton Castle), Simon Boughton, Ian Williams, Senga Macfie (Edinburgh Sports Club), Ashley Mears, Peter Cochrane, Ian Forshaw (Linlithgow), Lesley Aitken, Stuart Tennant (Edinburgh University), Christy Looby, Bill Marshall (Grange), Charlie Patrick (Agilent), Kim Byers (CLASS 88), Kevin Vincenti (C-Rooks).

**Apologies :** George Purves (Inveresk), Kim Atkinson (Scottish Squash), Ian Green (University Staff), Isla Davis (Kirkcaldy).

### **1. A.G.M. Minutes and matters arising**

The Minutes of the 33<sup>rd</sup> AGM (held at Grange Sports Club on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2007) were approved. There were no matters arising.

### **2. Chairman's Report**

Eric summarised his Report, which had been sent to the clubs. He confessed to a few errors in it – Dave Ireson is actually a Regional Director and Ron is Vice President of Scottish Squash, and it *is* necessary for a Level 3 referee to answer the written test and attend a course, as well as being assessed in matches. Richard McIntosh pointed out that it was Colinton 1 and not Colinton 2 who had withdrawn from the League last season.

### **3. League Secretary's Report**

Ron handed out trophies to the winners of the divisions : (Ladies) d3 : Next Generation, d2 : Kirkcaldy, d1 : CLASS 88 ; (Open) d6 : Dalgety Bay 4, d5 : C-Rooks 1, d4 : Waverley 2, d3 : Colinton 3, d2 : Agilent, d1 : Edinburgh University 1. He said it had been a poor season for disputes - not many and all quickly resolved. However, he will take a stricter line next season with any exploiting of the "borrowing a player from a lower team" rule. Also, there will have to be exceptional circumstances for a club to turn out, say, a full 2<sup>nd</sup> team but a short-handed 1<sup>st</sup> team, without punishment. When there aren't enough players, the lowest team should be the one to field fewer than 5 players. This time last year we'd put 78 people through a referee/marker course – the figure now was 126. One further course (no. 10) would be held free of charge, at Dean Squash Club in September. We now had 25 active referees in the East out of a total of 58 in Scotland. Christy asked if anything was to be done to help teams get their players qualified to Level 3 (to continue getting the 2 extra League points per match). Ron said it had just been made far easier to qualify, with candidates needing only 6 correct decisions out of 10 to be passed. These could be accumulated over a few matches. There would be a pre-season friendly tournament where all participants would be guaranteed an assessment and this could also be done at a League match. Ron, Dave Ferguson and Mike Halpin were all now qualified to assess Level 3 referees. Archie complimented the committee for making it far easier to find referees for tournaments.

### **4. Junior Convener's Report**

John drew attention to the excellent East Junior website set up by Dave Ireson and said we'd had very high entries in the Open and Closed tournaments, partly due to getting the dates right. The Leagues were working well and there'd been several encouraging initiatives, e.g. Girls Only days. Roughly half of the entrants in all Scottish junior events had been from the East. He thanked the committee for their 100% committed support, also the Fergusons for their work at Waverley, East, squads, etc. and Claire Kidd for her work in the new Junior Development Squad. He especially thanked Dave Ireson for the enormous amount of work he'd done. Last year Dave had announced he was moving to Aberdeen and John had wondered where he could find 4 people to replace him, but thanks to modern technology he was now involved more than ever. Dave is now going to be based on an oil rig, so John anticipates even more involvement from him. Dave then summarised what had been achieved over the past 3 years – plans, implementing of plans, consistently high numbers in tournaments, more girls playing, a pathway for improvers, coach education. We have more coaches than any other region and quite a few young ones. He invited anyone with any suggestions to contact the junior committee at any time.

### **5. Treasurer's Report**

Dave handed out copies of his report and the accounts. Overall the finances were healthy. Tournament income was down and expenses quite high, East Junior Open trophies had to be repurchased and Dave F had still to submit the figures and net income from the "Hugely Enjoyable" East Championships. Interest was up because of switching to a higher-interest account and we'd saved money when Scottish Squash's oversight resulted in our team not being entered in this season's (English) Inter-County competition. We have applied to re-enter a team next season. It had cost far more than expected to provide Interpreters for the Deaf at a referee/markers course, but this had been appreciated by those involved. There being no questions on the accounts, Dave offered to change their format next year to make them more fully explained. Eric suggested it would be helpful to list the tournaments separately.

6. Proposal from the League Secretary

Ron explained how our League rules require clubs to pay in full their League fees and Scottish Squash affiliation fees by 31<sup>st</sup> October or be expelled from the League. He has never enforced this, but every year has to chase some clubs up for payment, sometimes for the whole season. He now proposed to deduct 10 points per fixture until the payments are made. In particular, Linlithgow had not paid all of last year's affiliation fees and Ron intended to expel them by the end of July if this were still the case. Bill said he agreed to points deductions where East League fees were unpaid, but not for Scottish Squash fees. He was concerned about some of their requirements and felt the benefits of England Squash membership were far in advance of ours. Ashley suggested people may be reluctant to give out name/address/e-mail details – Archie replied that Scottish Squash only need name and address but encourage people to also give e-mail address so they can easily communicate. George was surprised Colinton's named individuals hadn't received notification of next week's AGM. Christy said he'd obtained Grange players' permission to give their e-mail addresses but was then concerned to see an e-mail from Scottish Squash with all those addresses openly shown "in the clear" – very much against Data Protection requirements in this era of identity fraud. It was agreed to amend the proposal and it was carried, with only 3 votes against, as : "from season 2008/09 the League Secretary will deduct 10 points from a club's teams, for each scheduled fixture after 31<sup>st</sup> October where their League fees remain unpaid".

7. Election of Office-Bearers and Committee Members

To their consternation the committee was re-elected en bloc and continues therefore to be : Chairman - Eric Donohoe, Treasurer – Dave Ireson, Secretary - Dave Ferguson, League Secretary - Ron Pearman, Junior Convener - John Bain, Committee Members - Yvonne Ferguson, Richard McIntosh. Eric as usual invited new members, preferably from clubs not already represented. There is room for 2 more and all you need do is contact one of the committee.

8. Any other business

Ashley briefly described events concerning the non-selection of Scottish no. 1 Senga Macfie for last month's European Team Championships in Amsterdam. She felt Senga had been unfairly treated, particularly as she had beaten all opposition in the Selection Events, had not been notified of her non-selection and the Appeal Committee's reasons after the event had been unsatisfactory. Eric said the team had been decided on 10<sup>th</sup> April, was announced/leaked on the 24<sup>th</sup> and left for the tournament on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Part of the Appeal answer was that Senga was too old. Senga added that she'd also been described as "not good under pressure conditions" but the people who said this had hardly seen her play. She felt her results showed she managed well under pressure and she wondered what "future potential" the other women in the squad have. Richard MacBride and Simon thought the team should be the best players now, unless there was someone exceptionally promising. Dave I countered that everything was geared towards the 2010 Commonwealth Games. George had been in Amsterdam and was astonished to see no Senga, but was told she hadn't indicated her desire to play – he felt the onus was the other way round. He thought the one desperate mistake had been not to communicate to the player and that the East should ask for an apology. Dave I said he had apologised to Senga for the unfair treatment, but Archie said it wasn't down to Dave to do this. Eric said Scottish Squash had proven incapable of communicating anything at all about the subject. Christy described it as mind-numbingly embarrassing to see the no. 1 player left out and the team finish 12<sup>th</sup>. Simon suggested that to accept Selection Event entry fees was to accept availability/desire for selection. Dave I said that selection procedures were to be reviewed in August by Mike Cavanagh (Area Manager, East Institute of Sport), Alex Sinclair, Jayne Smith (SportsScotland), Liz Mendl (Scottish Institute of Sport), Kim Atkinson and Paul Frank. The present system, where the National Coach picks the team, was seen as unfair on that individual. Ian Williams said the whole thing had been appalling man-management and a PR disaster. Dave I replied that Mike Cavanagh, Jayne Smith and Alex Sinclair had met last week and there was a will to make things better. Eric and Ron confirmed that East contributed about half of the fees paid to Scottish Squash and Christy asked for a vote of no confidence to be tabled. After further discussion, the following statement was agreed : "This meeting condemns the failure, by those responsible for the National Performance Programme, to communicate timeously and courteously with a player over selection for the European Championships 2008 and their subsequent failure to allow a fair and independent hearing to the player appealing." Nobody voted against this.

George reported that from next month all European tournaments, senior and junior, are switching to "point-a-rally" to 11 points, when it gets to 10-10 the first player to go 2 points clear wins. WISPA (the women's association) are going the same way and it will almost certainly spread to the World Squash Federation and all squash competitions. He also advised that, in March, 2 new sports out of 5 will be voted into the 2016 Olympics, with only a simple majority needed. He reckoned squash had a 50-50 chance of success.

Charlie, who has recently joined Linlithgow's committee, said they didn't want *not* to pay their affiliation fees and was sure Ron didn't really want to expel the club. The squash section of Linlithgow had agreed the amount but there was difficulty getting their management committee to pay the full amount. They were unhappy that it was £180 up on last year's and had so far paid only last year's amount. Ron made it clear that he did intend – with the East committee's agreement – to expel Linlithgow if they didn't pay up in full by the end of July. However, he offered to go to Linlithgow to meet Charlie and any others and help them calculate the fees from their membership lists, number of "competitive" players (who had not already been paid for by other clubs), etc. Charlie was happy to accept Ron's offer.

On this encouraging note, the meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the chair and its occupant, Eric.