



## NPUA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Date:** Sunday 24 February 2013

**Venue:** Barns Hotel, Cannock

**Attendees:** Lili James (LJ), Richard Kirk (RK), Val Sassall (VS), Hannah Sanders (HS), Martin Twist (MT) leaving at 13.00, Sean Edwards (SE)

**Apologies:** Sarah Chapman (SC), Annika Midwinter (AM), Karen Evans (KE),

**Invitees:** Richard Glynn-Jones (RGJ) and Matt Harrison (MH)

[The usual agenda structure was changed for the purpose of RGJ and MH attending. Therefore, the order of some minutes have changed to reflected the usual agenda structure.]

### 1. Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Update on actions:

- VS to organise strategy group meeting. Group identified and are interested in participating. Meeting to be arranged at earliest convenience.
- MT to provide content on new web section to explain more about the NPUA, how it fits in and where new umpires can get started.
- Tim Benford provided an update on radios, but no new information or a recommendation about the blue-tooth radios was available. HS to follow up with Tim to get clarity for next meeting.
  - RGJ offered to explore through EHB channels if clubs would be amenable to paying for and hosting radio sets. Several Executive Committee members have raised this issue informally with clubs and all have positively received the idea.
  - Tim Benford also supplied information regarding the number of personal sets in use across the programme. Only 7 members confirmed, although a further 6 are suspected to be in use. HS to add another news item and message via Facebook to get members to register their personal sets. **[Action: HS]**
  - Action on EHUSP to decide which members should get the remaining two sets now back from repair. The Exec Committee recommend those in the Premiership who do not have a set but are less comfortable using the technology should be given the opportunity to familiarise themselves. It was also recommended that unless an umpire with a set is available for more than 75% of the National Programme dates then their set should be distributed elsewhere, for maximum usage. **[Action: VS]**
  - It would also be useful to understand where the sets double up due to appointing. **[Action: TB]**
  - It was decided that if the sets are available at a match it is compulsory for the umpires to use them **[Action: HS – news item]**
- EHUISP selector succession discussions – in progress
- Steelcase were invited to attend the Maxifuel Super Sixes but were unable to attend on this occasion.
- EHB have assured that any future changes to fixtures will be more transparently communicated so that we can alert them to potential difficulties with appointing.
- SE recommended we discontinue Whistle Talk as it is too time consuming to produce with little feedback from members as to its usefulness.

[Action: HS to resend member survey information to SE]

[Action c/f: SE to progress survey]

- Additional April Exec Committee meeting is intended to review strategy, but the Committee members are struggling to find a suitable date. [Action: all to explore May as an alternative.]

## 2. Matters arising

There were no other matters arising not covered elsewhere in the minutes.

## 3. NPUA clothing range and new umpiring shirts

VS noted the Committee's thanks to Matt Harrison (Webmaster), Lili James (Shop Administrator) and our supplier Silver FX, on the fantastic work to launch our new umpiring shirts, particularly on distribution with the difficult weather conditions. Both shirts have been very positively received by umpires and clubs.

Matt Harrison joined the Exec Committee to provide an update on the next stage of refreshing our casual clothing range, possibly using a new supplier. Discussion was intended to seek direction on range; agreement on launch strategy; agreement on role of new Shop Administrator; implications for stock levels.

### Main elements:

- No holding of stock by NPUA
- Supplier holds a small level of most popular and average sized clothing for immediate dispatch
- Items not held in stock would require approximately 4 weeks delivery time (which is in line with previous suppliers)

### Range options:

- Fleece, ¾ zip and in a full zip
- Hoodie, traditional or with a zip
- Tracky-bottoms, knee length zip and full length zip
- Gilets – puffer or flat
- Coach / Assessor jackets – knee length for additional warmth
- Umpires jackets – same look and feel as coach / assessor jacket but hip length
- Casual shirt / milestone match shirt – variety of style options and colours
- Skort – bespoke to umpiring needs, 5 pockets
- Socks – blacks socks for female umpires with npua rose
- Beannie hats (fleece lined) with npua logo
- Under-armour to match the new umpiring shirts in lime, orange and black

### Design:

- Opportunity to re-fresh to a more modern look
- But recognising the age range in our membership
- Current suggestions are black and red mix

Next year is also our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (2013/14) and it's an opportunity to celebrate the Association's success with our membership and build into our Conference theme.

### Launch strategy:

- Photos and member endorsements from the end of this season's Playoffs. Needs to complement any EHB initiatives. Possibility to explore an introductory discount across initial orders or work with EHB to pursue a special offer.
- Market new range at end of season to then enable pre-orders over the summer, for collection at Conference 2013.
- Second wave of marketing at Conference 2013, for delivery in first week of new season.
- Shop Administrator to coordinate marketing strategy throughout the year.



- Will receive all automated emails about each individual order, for sense-checking.
- Then required to send onto Silver FX.
- Need to generate a quote for this function from Tex Solutions

**[Action: Webmaster]**

- Option to offer some kit extension to NYUPL, without the NPUA logo. The benefits of this joined up approach are:
  - Practical implications of umpiring with NPUA colleagues
  - Eases the transition when the majority of our new members are from NYUPL
  - Enables new members to feel a part of our association much quicker

**Costs**

- On par with current supplier.
- Includes design, VAT and embroidery

**[Action: Webmaster - continue with range proposed, explore more modern designs with a decision on colours to be provided by Executive Committee asap]**

**[Actions: Exec Committee – to decide on branding, colours and logo for use on 2013/14 clothing range by 15 March 2013]**

#### 4. Website

MH also provided an update about the NPUA website, in his capacity as Webmaster. Our website is now 10 years old. It was innovative at the time, but now needs adapting to meet new, more modern needs of our membership.

Opportunities include:

- (1) To reduce the number of alerts sent to members by email, to remind them to complete their actions, we could add a 'To Do' list at the top of each personal area.
  - Update personal area to a more simplified calendar and in a box format similar to that used in regions, which is a newer design
  - No functionality loss

**[Action: Sean Edwards to suggest a format through a crayon drawing]**  
**[Action: quote from Tex Solutions]**
- (2) Option to introduce a calendar, where NPUA data would be integrated into a member's existing electronic calendar (iphone, google, android etc). Information would be bespoke to the individual member, such as appointments.
  - This would complement the 'small screen' option already on offer
  - This is a function several members have requested, as it would make management of their hockey commitments much simpler and easier.
  - To launch at Conference with first batch of appointments

**[Action: quote from Tex Solutions]**

An update on all other improvements to the website was also provided:

- Members occupation and skill set input in personal area
- Milestone match alert to all involved
- Number of umpire, coaching and assessments, by member report

- Fitness test on assessment report summaries
- As a result of member feedback, we have changed the website to enable coaches to now see previous reports about the member they are due to coach. [Action: HS news item in response to request from coaches at conference]

## 5. EHB update from Richard Glynn-Jones

RGJ provided an update on how the consultation has progressed and the feedback received from regions.

Wide ranging proposals around four key areas of umpiring.

- (1) Strengthening county HUAs
- (2) Improving the training and education provision of umpiring
- (3) Strengthening the training and development work force, coaches and assessors and the tutors who deliver the courses
- (4) Establishing pathways that are clearer and more transparent to allow and enable progression

Areas for discussion with the NPUA Executive Committee included:

- **Observing umpires** – coaching and assessing. Possible change to the culture of coaching and assessing. Coaching could be more effective if each coach concentrated on one to three umpires throughout a season, to develop a beneficial relationship.
  - **Separating the pathways** – specialise and focus on coaching or assessing, with the exception of a few who could do both.
- **Relationship between NPUA and the regions** – how effective and how progression works. Perhaps some merit in a Transition Group, a group of individuals (small group) who have the potential to progress towards their Level 3 Award within the season. The individuals would benefit from targeted National Programme appointments, perhaps at weekends when availability is particularly tight. Sharing of good practice between regional / NPUA and greater feed to Level 3 Awards, outside of NYUPL feeder.

Feedback from consultation:

- High level of support across the spectrum
- Some more specific work to be undertaken on the Level 1 proposals and around the Transition Group idea
- Gradual step change to improve quality and quantity of umpires across England.

The Executive Committee provided initial feedback on RGJ's proposals. The Committee was broadly receptive to the idea of a Transition Group. Something similar is already in place within the NPUA through the WPG (Women's Performance Group) and through the NYUPL, as they can be used to fulfil appointments in the National Programme when there are shortages. This could be more formalised with the regions to use their top umpires too. NYUPL could be included within the Transition Group with adult regional members.

With regards to splitting coaching from assessing and choosing a pathway, this was recognised as a challenge in the short term. Longer term, the Committee recognised real benefits from coaching/mentoring a small group of umpires over a period of time. RGJ suggested a greater weight towards coaching over assessing. The Committee asked about the practicalities of making this change, but also recognised the benefits of this approach.

RGJ shared his experiences from the Rugby Football Union, as they were in a similar position to the NPUA about 10 years ago. It took 3-5 years to make real progress.



Immediate next steps from September:

- (1) NPUA coaches in place, who are dedicated to a few umpires to test the model.
- (2) Small group of individuals identified for a National Transition Group [new name required] to identify benefits and principles of the model, working with a lead from NPUA.

Regional feedback on the NPUA included:

- Requiring more information from NPUA on an official basis (RGJ briefed on history here)
- Greater leadership from the top down to the County level, for RGJ to disseminate more information through official channels
- Keep NYUPL as a specific development channel, but welcome their closer involvement within the regions
- Greater integration across the umpiring system

### **Umpire competencies / qualities research (joint EHB and NPUA venture)**

NPUA members were introduced to some research we wanted to conduct to better identify umpire competencies at the 2012 conference. This is now a joint venture with EHB as they want to conduct some similar research. We have now combined efforts to expand the breadth of this research to include other levels of umpiring outside the National Programme. This will help inform assessment criteria; training programme / modules; and performance competencies. RGJ will now pursue this research to provide comprehensive analysis. The intention is for RGJ to provide an update at Conference 2013, results and diaries permitting.

### **6. Finance**

RK provide an update on finances. In a healthy position and slightly more ahead than expected, but this is mainly due to not having spent the development budget as yet.

It was agreed two development group opportunities would be made available this season:

- £70 maximum for this season, for each member (to reflect 2 years of development) to claim back, if attending a sanctioned event.
- This is £70 in total, not £70 per event.
- Development Group lead to monitor who attends and costs via website

Two sanctioned events are:

- Investec World Series Semi-finals, Chiswick England in June
- Antwerp, EuroNations in August

**[Action: HS to add development groups to website, news item and ask for volunteers to lead]**

There was a concern about the cost of appointments already incurred through coaching and assessing. The EHUSP was alerted in December to the potential overspend. As a result of the continuing trend, the budget has been over spent in this area by 33% (approximately £1,400 to date) with more anticipated by the end of the season.

The split of this cost was 70% on assessment appointments, versus 30% on coaching.

As a result of this, the Executive Committee decided definitive action is required to remedy the situation. Therefore, all non-essential assessment will be cancelled in the remaining weeks of the season, from 9/10 March onwards. The only exceptions include:

- Critical watchings, where an umpire must be assessed to understand if they need removing from the National Programme
- Promotions, where an umpire has previously had watchings recommending promotion up a panel and needs one final watching to ratify the decision
- Demotions, where an umpire has previously had watchings recommending demotion down a panel and needs one final watching to ratify the decision
- Assessments at end of season tournaments by a UM

All proposed assessments for these remaining weekends will need to be submitted to the Executive Committee for review and agreement, with a rationale as to why each assessment is being proposed.

The Executive Committee expressed its disappointment at having to make such an intervention to maintain financial control, and clarified this was not a reflection on Assessors, who should not be adversely affected by this action.

The Indoor programme budget was reviewed. Slightly over budget again this year but not significant as EHIUSP / UMs restricted costs where possible and the small excess was a reflection of the distances some umpires had to travel as a result of new venues.

The NPUA Budget for 2013/14 will need to be submitted to EHB in May / June. NPUA to make proposals with clarification across categories to reflect our budgeting process between *competitions* and *development*, to reflect where the money actually goes. The Executive Committee also discussed an option to explore greater use of radios for next season, if clubs were to hold the radios. RGJ offered to explore this with EHB and EHL Clubs to understand the cost and responsibility involved.

[Actions: HS to send radio rationale to RGJ for evidence as to why this should be done.]

## **7. Conference 2013 – our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year!**

SE gave an update on Conference 2013 – the programme and budget. We reviewed a number of venues and costs.

Proposal was to return to Loughborough on 31 August and 1 September 2013, as it remains a very suitable venue, even though costs are likely to be 2% more expensive this year.

[Action: SE to confirm with Loughborough]

[Action: RK to add details for payments to website once Loughborough has confirmed]

General feedback was positive and suggests freshening it up and pushing the boundaries. Coaching lead panel sessions were also positively received.

Martin Twist, Mark Everard and Sean Edwards to meet up to start confirming the programme, as the new Organising Committee. Laura Geeson has said yes in principle but nearer the time she may be able to take a more active role.

External speakers to approach include Phillip Schellekens, Richard Glynn-Jones, or outside the hockey world (Wayne Barnes an international rugby referee). Organising Committee needs to liaise more closely with any external speakers to ensure they are properly briefed and presentation is on message.

Some feedback points for the Organising Committee to consider:



- Could approach coaches to lead more of the sessions and panel sessions again.
- How do we get more members to come particularly umpire members
- Need to improve the timing of the invitation to the regions.
- Need to improve the uptake from NYUPL invitations. RGJ to see what EHB support may be available to enable more NYUPL members to attend.
- Publicity about what conference is and for.
- Member recognition of most miles travelled, greatest number of games done etc

[Action: SE to circulate programme to Executive Committee for review]

[Action: HS to ask Phillip]

[Action: HS to review awards]

## 8. Succession planning

As a result of the advertisement since the last meeting. Several members have come forward to volunteer their time:

- **Secretary:** Sean Edwards has volunteered to be nominated as Secretary. As no other member has come forward at this time, Sean will now be include in Secretariat matters to begin to understand the role more fully
- **Shop Administrator:** Rachel Williams and Daran Cass both volunteered for this role. As Daran already does a similar role in his region it was felt he would be the best candidate and provide the smoothest handover.
  - [Action: LJ to contact both members and inform them of this decision.]
- **Non-portfolio Committee members:** Frances Block is the only member to have come forward to express an interest in joining the Executive Committee.
  - [Action: HS to continue to advertise the positions as we need several for this year]

A new Org Chart for NPUA was provided by HS to add clarity about our structure and roles. It will be refined further and added to the website.

As part of the Executive Committee's annual review of the Selection Panels, HS offered to contact each member and Chair of the EHUSP and EHUIP to get feedback on how the year has gone, in order to make recommendations as to appointments for the 2013/14 season.

### EHUIP

VS provided a brief update from the Indoor Selection Panel. The minutes were due to be provided this week for publication and confirmation of panel movements.

### EHUSP

VS provided a brief update from the Outdoor Selection Panel.

- Majority of meeting spent on event / tournament appointments
- Several Trainee UMs were passed and promoted

[Actions: HS to change to UMs once official minutes published]

No movement on marking system as wish to align it to the competencies research. However, it was recognised there is an opportunity to be clearer about our current outdoor marking system for September 2013. [Action: VS to feedback to EHUSP]

## 9. Coaching

It was noted John Litchfield has done some outstanding work this year. Particularly regard to weekly appointment of coaches, level 3 umpire coach candidates and providing insight into assessing and coaching statistics.

VS provided an update on coaching in Karen Evans absence. The Committee noted its disappointment with the lack of progress made this season. VS recommended the coaching subgroup could lead on the implementation of the strategy to start delivering tangible outputs. The subgroup will meet and agree a plan by end of March, to report into VS directly.

It was also suggested that this sub-group could complement some of the work being led by RGJ on developing a new level 3 coaching strategy as part of the national system. RGJ to be kept informed of progress and outputs.

[Action: VS to contact KE and subgroup]

Umpire management pathway draft will be made available for final review by the Exec Committee, with a view to publish afterwards.

[Action: VS to circulate when finalised]

The current EHB Coaching Awards document has been obtained together with an updated L3 coach assessment form for posting to the website to clarify the L3 candidate process.

[Action: HS to update website with Level 3 Coach Award paper work x 2]

FIH released their UM marking system. The NPUA have 12 people across the FIH UM pathway, which is excellent representation.

EHF has invited 10 England UMs to KO16 at Easter for a development seminar. No money is available from NPUA to fund this international development opportunity. EHB also has no money in their budget for this and were not aware of this opportunity from the EHF prior to the invitations being issued. The event may be annual so will be considered in our 2013/14 budgeting process.

[Action: RK]

## 10. AOB

- 10.1 It was agreed that under-armour / base layers colours should be standardised similar to the players' regulations – lime or orange or black, where possible both umpires should match. White or other colours are inappropriate. [Action: HS news item]
- 10.2 Fitness testing policy for 2013/14 to be on next agenda.
- 10.3 Inform TK supplier about casual clothing and Promologo who do our embroidery [Action: LJ]
- 10.4 Disposal of old stock to be offered to a Sports Charity. [Action: RGJ to provide details] [Actions: LJ to dispose of remaining old stock now new umpiring shirts have been launched. LJ to also confirm if remaining TK casual shirts are embroidered]
- 10.5 HS reminded the Committee that a central repository of files is being created on DropBox and everyone needs to start using it.
- 10.6 [Action: SE close down old FaceBook page]



10.7 Women's IDG programme: Liz, Jane and Dawn produced excellent plans. **Action:**  
**publish document on website HS]**

Meeting closed at 16:18