



NPUA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Saturday 24 November 2012

Venue: Barns Hotel, Cannock

Attendees: Lili James (LJ), Richard Kirk (RK), Val Sassall (VS), Karen Evans (KE), Hannah Sanders (HS), Martin Twist (MT).

Apologies: Sarah Chapman (SC), Sean Edwards (SE) and Annika Midwinter (AM).

1. Minutes

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

2. Matters arising

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

3. Strategic Direction

VS provided an update on the work of EHB led by the Richard Glynn-Jones (RGJ), the new Officiating and Volunteer Manager, who is focusing on re-energising the Level 1 umpire process. There is a meeting on 11 December at Bisham Abbey that VS is attending. VS is then meeting with RGJ and Holly Woodford afterwards.

With regards to NYUPL, there was a discussion regarding how those members feed into the NPUA, which has been our most successful feeder to Level 3 umpires to date. However, NYUPL is currently going through the rebuilding cycle that occurs every few years, so we are likely to receive fewer candidates this year.

There was a discussion regarding the future of the Association and its strategy over the coming months and years, in order to identify our budgetary requirements. The primary goal is to ensure suitable membership numbers to enable full facilitation of the National Programme. The recruitment pathway of new Level 3 umpires is not balanced to sufficiently supply the National Programme. Therefore, there was a discussion concerning:

- how we work with NYUPL;
- working with and providing guidance to the regions;
- progressing umpires from Level 2 to Level 3;
- widening appointment opportunities;
- and working with EHB to reshape the Level 3 Umpire Award in line with the new Umpire Award structure being developed by GB.

It was suggested by VS that these issues are picked up by a new group of people who will specifically look at the Association's long term strategy, as discussed on the Executive Committee's telephone conference on 6 November.

[Action: VS to circulate additional minutes from the conference call, to supplement those already circulated by HS. VS also to schedule the first meeting of this strategy group – which will not be possible until January or February – to decide what areas of umpiring we want to lead on going forward and who will own them within our membership]

It was noted GB is reviewing the Level 1 courses, to be delivered by paid educators and assessors; rolling out in 2013 – 2018 with newly trained educators and assessors in



England. The pilot was conducted in Wales. Chairing this group is Helen Bushell, from Hockey Wales.

[Action: VS to discuss with EHB on 11 December and feedback to the Executive Committee via email afterwards]

Recruitment

There was a discussion about using our members who are ex-national league players as role models to showcase with EHB. There was a suggestion that some presentation material should be compiled.

[Action: MT to provide information to next EHL Committee meeting]

There was also a suggestion to add a new section / information on the website to help umpires get started and find out about umpiring.

[Action: MT to provide paper to start content. HS to contact Webmaster to discuss with Tex Solutions where to locate such a section on the webpage. A larger re-structuring of the website may also be required, but this will depend on the future strategy of the Association]

4. Technology

Tim Benford (TB) provided a paper for discussion regarding the future roll-out of radios. Several options were proposed and discussed, including the use of radios or Bluetooth technology, holding them at EHL Clubs, providing a pair per member or to individuals, penetration across the Premiership and into the Conference Divisions.

VS commented that there are other choices of less expensive technology available, outside the performance sets, which still have the ability to cancel out the whistle noise. We need to trial one of these. We should also approach RGJ to see if he has any contacts with the RFU.

The Exec noted the paper provided by TB was very useful and well considered, providing options for agreement and further investigation. It was also noted that several clubs have fed back anecdotally how much they value the radios and that they would be willing to hold them. A more extensive survey of the clubs may be required if this option is to be fully explored.

RK commented that once the full scope and costs have been assessed, it will assist to inform the most appropriate decision.

It was agreed that the specifications need to be appropriate for umpiring. We should test as many sets as possible this season with a view to roll-out for 2013/14.

[Action: TB to formally feedback about use of Bluetooth sets for sanctioning in the National Programme and options for future roll-out across all leagues]

Futures Cup – a note of thanks from the Futures Cup team was captured, as the Association lent them the use of the radios for the tournament. The radios were exceptionally well received by coaches, players, EHB representatives and the umpiring



team. The umpires also looked after the sets very well and there were no problems during the tournament. This privilege was taken with much responsibility.

A matter was raised concerning a member who has abused the privilege of being provided with a radio set during the first three months of the season. This was discussed at length and it was suggested by VS that a letter should be sent to that umpire about their future conduct.

[Action: VS to contact the member]

A reminder needs to be issued to members that they need to register their radio set if they have purchased their own for use in the National Programme with TB, so that he can keep track of the number of members using radios.

[Actions: HS news item]

It was decided for the second half of the season that any spare radios (outside use with IDG) would be used with A and B Panel umpires.

Distribution of radios was also discussed and an audit will be conducted to assess the current stock, by TB. A reminder about looking after them responsibly would also be issued at the collection and distribution points in the season. All members using the radios will also have to inform TB when they have posted their set back and to acknowledge receipt.

[Action: TB to coordinate distribution and collation]

5. Selection

UM progression from trainee to full UM

A new document has been drafted to clarify the UM pathway, with respect to a Trainee UM and then a full UM. It will be developed further and published later in the season. The draft was positively received and is a well-structured, thorough document.

It was agreed that the new pathway would be reviewed with Selection to ensure that Trainee UMs currently in process are considered ahead of the new UM pathway being implemented from September 2013 for the 2013/14 season, so that they are not adversely affected by the new process.

This will also provide clarity for UMs / Trainee UMs / Coaches appointed to tournaments, as there will be no such category of an Assistant UM in the National Programme going forward. It was noted, this concept had been taken from the FIH system where they often use Assistant UMs as a training opportunity.

[Action: VS to feed into the next Selection meetings on 1 December and in February once UM Pathway document completed]

UM role as an Assessor

It was also confirmed that existing UMs should have the opportunity to assess in the National Programme, but that this is not currently reflected on the website. UMs have to be able to coach and assess at tournaments, therefore the same should apply for



leagues games. As a result, all UMs who are not listed as Assessors will be added to the Assessor list.

It was also noted that Assessors are appointed before Coaches, therefore, members are encouraged to state in the 'comments box' on their availability which role they wish to be appointed as. A news item will be issued to remind members who are Coaches and Assessors to indicate their preferred role in the comments box.

[Action: HS to update website and issue a news item]

Balance of Assessing versus Coaching

Member feedback regarding the balance of the number of assessments and coaching appointments was discussed. It was also recommended that coaching appointments should be made first before assessing appointments, linking to the minutes in the previous section above.

[Action: VS to take to next Selection meeting and feedback to Exec Committee]

Succession planning

Congratulations to Barry Anderson who has been appointed to the IHL as TD. Therefore, this may have an impact on the EHUIISP, as there is one less Selector available and this was Barry's last season as an indoor Selector. A replacement is required by the end of the Indoor season with an opportunity to co-opt them onto the Panel before the end of the Indoor season. Several names were discussed at length and a recommendation made to the Chair of the EUIISP.

A development pathway for Selectors is also required.

[Action: VS to feedback recommendations to Chair of EHUIISP and start a development pathway for Selectors]

It was also noted that our membership has a vast array of skills we are simply not aware of. Therefore we should look to capture occupation and/or skills, which may be of use to the Association, through members' personal pages.

[Actions: HS to contact Webmaster to understand if this is possible]

6. Coaching

KE provided an update on her meeting with Jane Nockolds, regarding the coaching strategy. 12 people responded to the coaching survey out of 42 coaches – which was a disappointing response from the members who have been so vocal on this issue.

- Level 3 Umpire Coach Assessment criteria has been completed
- Level 3 Umpire Coach pathway has been completed
- Registration / candidate form captured
- Candidate assessment report form captured

[Action: KE to circulate coaching development action plan and papers. KE to arrange a meeting with RJG to discuss changes to Level 2 Umpire Coach criteria and how that fits with our framework]



The coaching group, who offered to assist with development opportunities for coaches during this season, will have access to the survey results to understand where and when we can use this feedback. There is a possibility to look at development groups at Indoor or a Conference game and offering attendance (at their own cost) to aspiring Level 2 Umpire Coaches within regions to work more closely with us.

Members working on coaching opportunities are: Dawn Henning; Frances Block; Jane Nockolds; Dawn Bonner; John Litchfield.

[Action: Coaching group to have a conference call and drive the coaching plan for tactical development of our current coaches, such as development opportunities, to be organised by KE]

There was a discussion regarding how long it should take for a candidate to successfully pass their Level 3 Coach. It was agreed all future Coach Candidates (not those currently in the system) will be expected to pass their candidacy in a maximum of two seasons (or two calendar years if entering mid-season), or they may be automatically returned to region. NPUA retains the right to extend this timeframe in special circumstances.

[Action: HS to inform John Litchfield. KE to add to the new coaching model]

It was suggested that all future surveys should be done online, via surveymonkey or some other similar provider to provide easier analysis once completed and a better user experience for our members.

7. Finances

RK provided an update on finances – we are currently ahead of budget predictions.

Highlights included:

- Conference 2012 came in within budget
- Olympic ticket allocation returned our original investment as planned
- 40% deposit on new umpiring shirts has been paid, due for delivery at first Premier weekend of Indoor, then to all other members. The showcase will be at the end of the Indoor season at the National Finals, with Steelcase sponsors to be invited as our guests [Action: VS to invite Steelcase to the Indoor National Finals]
- Not all members have paid their subscription, as is usual at this time in the season
- EHB have paid both invoices on time – which has been much appreciated

Development events and IDG activities

- There was an issue with the men's IDG development activity to the EHL in East Grinstead as these expenses have not been inputted properly by members. Therefore this has caused some difficulty in allocating budget. Better communication prior to these events is required between the Exec Committee, IDG leads and the IDG attendees [VS to note as the liaison to the Selection Committee and IDGs].
- Similar problems are occurring with the Los Reyes event. The Exec Committee clarified that members cannot claim for travel expenses to the airport nor car parking at the airport. There was also a concern about the variety of people appointed, considering some were appointed on previous occasions. It was noted that better advertisement of this opportunity should be sought in order to encourage more members to put themselves forward for this excellent development opportunity. This should also be an opportunity to develop aspiring



coaches. [Action: VS to contact those attending Los Reyes to clarify what they can claim for and what they cannot]

Development budget

Budget is still available for a variety of activities this season. Four development events have been provided on 1 and 2 December across the country.

A resource is required to lead the development group activities, coordinate, secure coaches and organise the communication of the events.

[Action: KE to approach suggested members to coordinate development groups]

Suggested dates may include:

- Women's Finals weekend at the end of season, 27 April 2013
- Men's Finals weekend on 4 May 2013
- Promotion playoffs at different venues (depending on location)
- International opportunities such as EHL or the EuroNations

8. Membership

SE presented a paper analyzing our membership and availability (via Skype from Florida!).

The Exec noted that this was an excellent paper and commended SE for his efforts in analyzing the data and compiling useful recommendations. It was also noted that the paper provided by Colin Barthorpe in May 2012 assisted with several of the themes identified.

[Action: VS to share paper with EHB for information and to ensure we become compulsory consultees when Clubs request to change fixture dates with EHB]

[Action: HS and SE to draft a one page summary for the next edition of WhistleTalk to share with members, via the website or Facebook]

[Action: SE to repeat analysis on a regular basis and capture these outputs; explore if we can assess this for previous seasons]

[Action: HS to add a news item to alert members about weekends that are more difficult to appoint to encourage more members to make themselves available, working with Colin Barthorpe to identify the weekends]

9. AOB

Conference 2013

The Exec Committee needs to confirm the organising committee for Conference 2013, venues and budget. SE to lead, MT to do finances, but others needed to help organise, write presentations, liaise with the venue, organise the shop. HS confirmed she does not have capacity this year and MT needs to take a reduced role in the organisation and logistics.

Mark Everard and Laura Geeson both offered to help with next year.



[Action: SE to follow up with these volunteers]

[Action: HS to add news item to ask volunteers to help with a list of jobs]

Survey

It was agreed the survey conducted two years ago should be repeated. AM and SE were approached to lead this activity, but AM confirmed she does not have capacity. It was agreed other members could be involved in repeating the survey. Therefore a news items should advertise this to the membership for assistance.

[Action: SE to lead on behalf of Exec but with resource from elsewhere in membership]

Venues for meetings: RK conducted some analysis on meeting venues for the Exec Committee and EHUSP. In an effort to reduce costs where possible, it was confirmed Cannock is a central and cost effective location for the Exec Committee. It may also be a suitable venue for the EHUSP however they have several more southerly based participants. [Action: VS to feedback to the EHUSP]

Club behaviour: behaviour of clubs was mentioned after games. MT to monitor umpire feedback on clubs and any increase in MMOs. [Action: MT to monitor and escalate if required]

EHB Annual Report: any highlights from NPUA and NYUPL for submission by 7 December. [Action: VS to feedback to RGJ]

EHB regulatory updates required: it has come to our attention that several EHL documents need updating urgently, to reflect new rules or additional guidance.

- Outdoor and indoor regulations (being updated by David Ellcock and Jo Pennycook)
[Action: MT to review wording for a technical red card]
- Guidance to our members on abandonment of games, for example due to a serious injury or bad weather – this is an umpire's responsibility not the Match Officials.
[Action: HS to add news item to clarify umpire's responsibility]

Succession planning for NPUA Executive Committee: as stated by HS at the 2012 AGM, this is her final year as Secretary. HS originally agreed to three years as an Officer, as per the usual term, but agreed to stay on for an additional fourth year to provide continuity since there was a new Chair. Need to agree or advertise for a replacement in order to begin the handover in February ready for September's 2013 AGM.

LJ has also expressed her wish to step down from the Exec and role as Shop Administrator, in addition to the possibility of AM.

[Action: confirm new Secretary and Shop Administrator by February's 2013 Exec Committee meeting for handover.]

Roles and responsibilities of Exec Committee were proposed in September. Each member agreed this would be useful to develop further and add to the website.

[Action: all to consider roles within Exec Committee and update summary.]



[Action: HS circulate information captured about roles and responsibilities]

Shop stock

LJ provided a stock inventory of media resources available, old casual clothing and current umpiring shirts in the yellow, blue and black.

[Action: HS and RK to email members who may have special financial circumstances to offer them old stock of casual clothing range]

[Action: LJ to take old shirt stock to charities after Christmas, when new shirts have arrived]

[Action: LJ to provide HS example of existing casual clothing range. HS to explore extending casual clothing range with a new support system to reduce the need for NPUA to hold stock]

Fitness

15 people have requested assistance with fitness testing this season. KE working with these members and others to help develop on going fitness programmes. Process seems to be working and ensures they are tested against the deadline (except those who notify KE late). 22 members have been helped with their fitness this season through KE.

Milestone matches

With the increasing number of milestone matches, we need an improved notification mechanism. Therefore it was agreed an email alert to notify all involved in milestone matches at 100, 200 and 300 matches, so a presentation can be made at that game, should be implemented. [Action: HS to contact Webmaster to implement via Tex Solutions]

Future meetings

Conference call 8 January 2013 at 7.30pm
Exec meeting 24 February 2013 at Barns Hotel, 10.30am
Exec meeting 27 April 2013
Exec meeting 23 June 2013

Meeting closed at 15.53