

Australian Croquet Association
(Croquet Australia)

Plenary Session held in Brisbane on Friday April 4 2008

The notes taken at this session held prior to the AGM are issued for general information.

Attendees: John Fransen (President), Stephen Meatheringham (Senior Vice President), Max Murray (Vice President), Tony Hall (Treasurer), Maree Skinner (Executive Director), Graham and Gwen Denehey (TAS), Jacky and Geof McDonald (NSW), Elizabeth Fleming and Valda Wintzer (QLD), George Latham and Val Brown (VIC), Norma and Doug Amey (SA), Brian Hadley and Doug Hall (WA).

Observers: Lowen Clarke, Bruce Mitchell, Christine Pont.

Apologies: Nil

Opening: President, John Fransen declared the meeting open at 10 am and welcomed all present. He thanked Croquet Qld for arranging the venue and refreshments. John addressed the meeting with regard to the past year:

- A vote of thanks to the Executive for their work throughout the year;
- Few players are aware of who the ACA is or why it exists;
- The need to encourage more volunteers to come forward;
- The publication of the Croquet Australia Magazine is crucial to the Association and it must be supported by increased subscriptions to prevent it from passing into history;
- Emails are an aid to communication but can be subject to abuse and waste valuable time;
- The need for relevant experience on the Executive Committee;
- John thanked everyone for their support and said the year had been an invaluable experience for him.

John asked if there were any additional matter for discussion – nil put forward.

Doug Hall mentioned that the issues raised by John in his address were common to Executives in all States and continuity in governance is a problem. Doug thanked John for his contribution during the past year. Val Brown also thanked John for all the support given to Croquet Victoria.

1. Notices of Motion

1.1 Part C - Condition 56 Australian Medal Competition

Agreement from the floor with the proposed change.

1.2 Part B - Section 27.5 Selection Committee

- 1.2.1 Jacky McDonald queried the need for two separate Selection Committees in the future (GC and AC).
- 1.2.2 Stephen Meatheringham requested that more GC results be submitted. The understanding of tactics and technical expertise is required for selection. The Selection Policy needs to incorporate GC selection.
- 1.2.3 Doug Hall said that equitable selection was necessary to select winning teams.
- 1.2.4 Christine Pont spoke from the floor about the need to lift the image of GC. It should have the same standing as AC.
- 1.2.5 Elizabeth Fleming inquired about GC expertise on the Selection Committee. She made note of the fact that the tactics in AC and GC were quite different. Three of the Selectors play both AC and GC at State and National Level.
- 1.2.6 General agreement that there is a need to ensure that there is a knowledgeable GC Player on the Selection Committee.
- 1.2.7 George Latham mentioned that VCA had a separate GC Selection Committee and he felt that it did not work.
- 1.2.8 Christine Pont thought there should only be one selection committee.
- 1.2.9 Elizabeth Fleming said that diversity is important in our sport and that a small group of people could lead to problems. She also noted that GC numbers were soaring.
- 1.2.10 Geof McDonald stated that GC is becoming very important. GC selectors should be on the Selection Committee.
- 1.2.11 Stephen Meatheringham mentioned that there would be separate Tournament Regulations for GC within the next 12 months.
- 1.2.12 The conclusion was that one selection committee for AC & GC is suitable for now, but there may be a need for two committees in the future.

1.3 Part C – Conditions 51.14 Five Minute Warm-up.

- 1.3.1 Elizabeth Fleming was opposed to the change.
- 1.3.2 George Latham stated that players competing at International Level would be at a disadvantage if they expected to have the 5 minute warm-up between games (in BO3 and BO5 matches).
- 1.3.3 Tony Hall gave the example of the British Open where a five minute hit-up is allowed before the start of the match and then players are not allowed to practice again until play is

complete at the end of the day. He also said it applies in England, NZ and USA.

1.4 Part C – Conditions 51.15 Practice

- 1.4.1 Discussion re the meaning of the words. Tony Hall reworded the clause to read: “On Courts being used for the tournament for the day, players may only practice at the discretion of the Venue Manager.” Agreed.

1.5 Motion 1- New South Wales - ACA Court Hire

- 1.5.1 Brian Hadley asked why this matter was before the Council as it should be a matter to be decided by the Executive.
- 1.5.2 Tony Hall explained the impact on the fees for events if the increase was approved.
- 1.5.3 Jacky McDonald explained the rationale for the proposed increase in court hire fees.
- 1.5.4 Tony Hall explained the impact on entry fees for events and NSW thought it was reasonable to increase entry fees in accordance with the increase in court hire fees. (NSW pays \$20 per court per day to clubs for court hire)
- 1.5.5 John Fransen spoke about the cost to clubs for court maintenance. (The request for an increase in court hire fees came from Mosman CC).
- 1.5.6 Brian Hadley and Doug Hall reiterated that this was a matter that should be handled by the Executive. There are a range of economic matters that need to be considered by the Executive.
- 1.5.7 Tony Hall made the point that payments for courts were only introduced five years ago and until then clubs had covered the cost with catering and fund-raising. Tony has been Treasurer for some time now and has an idea of what events cost. He has spent a year organising the accounts on MYOB and only since January 1st this year has a clear picture emerged of the real costs. Last year, we made a loss on every event. The Events Manager’s travel is offset against the relevant event.
- 1.5.8 Geof McDonald made the point that the Events Manager hands the event to the Tournament Manager – agreed. The remuneration to clubs is not enough – clubs are happy to host ACA Events – but not at a loss.
- 1.5.9 Doug Hall suggested that there should be input sought from a range of clubs and then the Executive should make the decision whether to increase the fee or not. If clubs are not happy then they can opt out. Croquet West gave a grant to the clubs who hosted the nationals.

1.6 Motion 2 – New South Wales – Referee Refreshments

- 1.6.1 Tony Hall mentioned that this fee had already been included in the Budget. He said the number of referees needs to be rationalised.
- 1.6.2 Brian Hadley said this was a courtesy to referees. Suggested the ACA give a grant to states to run national competitions.
- 1.6.3 Discussion followed re negotiation of referee numbers. (Dependant on the type of event).
- 1.6.4 George Latham said that VCA finds it difficult to get clubs to host events due to the number of volunteers required to plan, prepare and host events.
- 1.6.5 Doug Hall reiterated that he thought these matters should be decided by the Executive. Elizabeth Fleming said that the Council should make the decision and the Executive carries out that decision.

2. Treasurer's Report

- 2.1 Tony made the point that he was required by law to present his report at the AGM and would also summarise at the Plenary Session.
- 2.2 He directed the Council's attention to the Committee Certificate that listed a loss of \$43,194. This figure is inflated by the transfer of \$14,000 into the International Fund - the true amount of the loss is \$29,000. There was a deficit of \$3,000 on national events, \$9,000 on the magazine (although the number of subscriptions has increased almost to the break-even point at this time).
- 2.3 There was discussion about the Honorarium for the Events Manager. There was agreement that there should be an Honorarium for the Events Manager. Val Brown asked why the President doesn't get an Honorarium, it was clarified that the President has all expenses reimbursed.
- 2.4 Jacky McDonald requested that the Executive review all Honoraria. Brian Hadley said we should know the true cost of voluntary positions.
ACTION: The Executive will review Honoraria.
- 2.5 Tony explained the notes to the Financial Statements and progressed to the 6th Draft Budget.
- 2.6 Jacky McDonald queried the budget allocation for the National Director of Coaching and discussed his costs to states to visit and coach. Elizabeth Fleming said that QLD were going to get a grant to fund his visit to QLD. Tony Hall

clarified that in order to keep his costs down there is a need to charge a fee for coaching.

- 2.7 Christine Pont asked how the states should finance the visits of the Directors. Guidelines should be established for visits.
ACTION: Executive to review.
- 2.8 Brian Hadley asked when the funds would be expected to return to a more healthy state. Tony explained that things should start to improve in 2009 and will be in credit by 2010.
- 2.9 Jacky McDonald enquired about sponsorship – Jayco has invited us to present a submission by June 2008. Max is in the process of negotiating with a national Company for sponsorship. He requested that states provide a list of postcodes of all members. Agreed.
- 2.10 Geof McDonald asked why the budget allowance for Gateball was \$1,500 and GC was only allowed \$1,000. Doug Hall commented that comparisons should not be made – the bids should be made transparent and people should accomplish their goals within that budget. (Chris Pont had in fact put in a bid for \$3,000 and Tony had overlooked it as it was submitted early – the budget for the NDGC was amended to \$3,000).

3. Events

- 3.1 Jacky McDonald inquired when the ACA would introduce equality between AC and GC Events. For example: the AC Men's and Women's singles and Doubles Championships (No equivalent in GC).
ACTION; The question was taken on notice.
- 3.2 Brian Hadley asked for clarification of the format for the GC Teams Event. Max explained that it would be a 2 x 2 format with 3 players playing equally. Discussion followed and further clarification was sought as to how the three players will play.
ACTION; The question was taken on notice.
- 3.3 Doug Hall suggested considering equalisation of Events in the States. (The President's Eights is a good example of equalisation). Need also to look at the Event rotation.
- 3.4 The Eire Cup and associated events will be held in Sydney in 2009. The organising committee has already met. The same courts will not be used for the Men's & Women's and the Eire Cup (may be one or two exceptions). Some clubs do not want to lose club play for all 9 days. Nine Clubs will be used for the events all close to rail or bus services. HQ not decided yet.

4. Players Meeting

- 4.1 Some of the suggestions from the Players Meeting in November 2007 have been taken into account and the rest will be considered in the current review of Tournament Conditions and Regulations.
- 4.2 Tony Hall and a working party will be reviewing the Regulations and Stephen Meatheringham is looking at formats.

5. Other Business

5.1 Discussion Papers from NSW

- 5.1.1 Jacky McDonald outlined her paper.
- 5.1.2 The Executive will form a working party to review the ACA Constitution and Governance. Brian Hadley said that he did not necessarily agree with a comprehensive review of the constitution. Tony Hall spoke in favour of the Executive having votes (He gave an example of being at a meeting where delegates reversed previous decisions as they had not taken a proper overview of the situation) Geof McDonald said that incorrect decisions may be due to not having enough information. Elizabeth Fleming agreed the constitutional review was necessary. Transparency essential. She also commented that a council meeting once a year may not be enough – suggest a video-conference once a year to supplement the AGM.
- 5.1.3 Doug Hall made the point that the Executive is elected at the AGM and should just get on with the job. The word “council” is problematic as “on going control” is implied by that term.
- 5.1.4 Elizabeth Fleming agrees with the status quo but it needs more transparency. Use electronic communication. Tony pointed out that the Executive posts information on the website.
- 5.1.5 Geof McDonald suggested using Skype due to the high cost of conferencing. Stephen commented that use of Skype is not always permitted.

5.2 GC Handicapping

- 5.2.1 Jacky McDonald outlined the paper.
- 5.2.2 Chris Pont and Brian Hadley disagreed with Jacky.
- 5.2.3 Stephen addressed the meeting in response to the NSW Discussion Paper – explained some basic probability theory and how it relates to handicapping.

The meeting closed at 12.40pm