

Australian Croquet Association
(Croquet Australia)

Plenary Session held in Adelaide on Friday March 31st 2006

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

Attendees: Creina Dawson, President/Secretary (assisted by Maree Skinner), Gary Fox, Senior Vice President, Tony Hall, Treasurer,
Delegates: Pam Hamilton, Rob McAdam, (Tas.), Neil Hartley, (NSW) Philip Hadley, Carlyne Fraser, (SA), George Latham, Valerie Haseloff, (Vic.) Cynthia Tacey, Judy Fowler, (Qld), Kay Chynoweth, (WA)

Observers: Keith McLeod (Qld) Rosemary Graham (NSW) Nancy Whittingham (SA)

Apology: Greg Rowberry, Vice President

Opening: The meeting was opened at 10.00 am by President Creina Dawson, who welcomed all attendees and introduced Nancy Whittingham and thanked her for arranging lunch and refreshments and also Maree Skinner as minute-taker for the day's proceedings (and future Secretary of Croquet Australia as of July 2006). Creina invited all present to introduce themselves. She explained that the Plenary Session was designed as a forum to discuss issues listed for the AGM Agenda and reported that last year's session had been well received.

Creina invited Gary Fox to introduce the first item on the Plenary Session Agenda.

Topics for Discussion

1. Future Program, including the basis of funding and charging for Events.

Gary, in introducing The Future Events paper, explained that the Events calendar had been consolidated into one document, thus allowing consideration of events and to look to the future. Event formats have changed and the basis of funding for these events has also changed. Owing to requests for Croquet Australia to conduct more events, a review of the issues arising is appropriate. The funding of events also needs to be addressed. The paper was dealt with in line with the goals outlined in the paper.

The meeting agreed with the following:

Association events

National Handicap Event

To be continued at Rich River and Croquet Australia to encourage other states to conduct similar events.

Entry numbers to be capped if necessary and the lowest handicapped players will be excluded first to maintain the original concept for Croquet Australia to provide events for other than the elite players.

Australian Singles Championship

Integrity of these events to be maintained at an International Standard best-of-three knockout with entries limited by lawn availability and no greater than 80 players in the Open and 48 players each in the Men's and Women's. The knockout rounds in the Open to be preceded by block play to determine players moving on to the final 32.

The Plate events continue, as block play for the Open and as a series of multiple Swiss events providing 5/6 games for each player in the Men's and Women's events with a single life knockout final.

Several comments were made from the floor – Queensland is proposing to follow this format for their Open events. SA (C Fraser) commented that Clubs were happy to make lawns available but club members also want to have use of the lawns and this may be a source of conflict. Creina commented that the advantage of holding more frequent events is to give event managers better experience. Tasmania (Rob McAdam) requested that players be given reasonable notice to make travel arrangements. Gary replied that maximum notice would probably be 6 weeks.

Golf Croquet

To introduce an interstate teams event for Golf croquet, initially limited to teams of 4, 2 men and 2 women and to play, in each test match, two doubles and eight singles matches. Matches to be best of three 13-point games.

To review these arrangements annually.

To maintain the events suitable for playing at small lawn venues – probably a 6/8 lawn venue, to allow all States to conduct Croquet Australia events.

To establish the Open Singles Golf Croquet Championship as the premium golf croquet event in Australia and play a format similar to the world Championship.

States will submit expressions of interest to conduct these events.

Comment

Old requested a guideline as to how to get a Golf Croquet Event going – Gary replied that Croquet Australia would gladly support and help to run events held by States if required.

Cost of events

To move to a transparent basis of funding all events and to cancel any arrangements that provide subsidisation of events/States and set entry fees at full cost recovery on the current basis of funding.

Establish clear guidelines for the submission and consideration of special requests for assistance and publish the reasons for these decisions. These submissions will be considered to develop experience within the croquet community in conducting these events, within the budgetary constraints of Croquet Australia.

To develop a partnership arrangement between Croquet Australia and the States to utilise the experience available to conduct large-scale international standard events and to promote the conduct of State events in this manner.

States/Croquet Australia

States agreed to the events proposed and the provision of lawn facilities to conduct events.

A Tournament Management Fee to be introduced to replace the lawn hire fee. This fee will be set at the same basis as the current lawn hire fee.

States agreed to the centralisation of the Open at the new VCA headquarters on conditions acceptable to Croquet Australia and the VCA. Croquet Australia will advise States of arrangements agreed with the VCA

States confirmed their willingness to continue to conduct the remaining events on a rotational basis unless otherwise approved by the Executive to cover special one-off arrangements.

Comments

It was felt that the Interstate Cup should continue to rotate around the States. The Open Singles should be centralised and held in Victoria pending agreement with Croquet Victoria – NSW stated they still had an interest in hosting The Open. The Chair resolved to have discussions with Victoria and report back.

Croquet Australia has deliberately moved to increase funds available to States from Championship events. Income generated from badge sales is now retained by the States and not split with Croquet Australia. Positive steps have been taken to reduce costs, including changes to the duties of the Events Manager.

Croquet Australia will need to review the workload of its volunteers, especially with the increase in Golf Croquet events. The duties of the National Director of Golf croquet will need to be reviewed.

International Events

Croquet Australia to:

- establish formalised arrangements for States/venues to submit expressions of interest to conduct international events.
- provide flexible funding arrangements for international events based on the overall cost structure to Croquet Australia and the venue conducting the event.
- seek specific expressions of interest to conduct future World Association and Golf Croquet Singles Championships

Comments

Clubs should be recognised for the efforts of members to host National events. However there are benefits to Clubs by way of membership, facility improvement and fund-raising.

Croquet Australia has agreed to be a backup venue for the WCF World Golf Croquet Championship, scheduled to be held in South Africa in 2007.

Australia has been reluctant to hold international events. Bunbury, WA conducted the WCF World Singles Championship in 1997. This was highly successful and financially beneficial to all parties. We should be looking to conduct these events with greater frequency.

Gateball

Keith McLeod (National Director of Gateball) addressed the meeting and requested that Gateball events also be listed on the Calendar of Events. This was agreed.

2. Insurance – Greg Rowberry was not in attendance therefore this topic will be covered in the minutes of the AGM.

Creina invited Tony Hall to present the Treasurer's Report.

3. Treasurer's Report

Tony presented the Financial Statements. Copies of all documents were provided to the Attendees.

- Net loss for the year of \$20,573 was increased from \$3,767 by the transfer of \$16,806 to the International Events Fund (to support Trans-Tasman and MacRobertson Shield). The drop in Member's Funds from \$261,327 to \$257,560 accords with the budget after taking into account the cancellation of the usual \$10,000 grant from Australian Sports Commission.
- QLD has withdrawn from Croquet Australia Insurance Scheme and has arranged independent insurance.
- Croquet Australia now manages 6 (soon to be 7) events per year.
- Australian Sports Commission has discontinued the \$10,000 per year grant to Croquet Australia. Gary spoke about this issue and said that Croquet Australia wants to reinstate the grant and will prepare a submission. Croquet Australia will lobby for funds.
- There was discussion regarding the guidelines for the investment of funds. Tony clarified the requirements for the meeting. According to the Constitution the Executive makes decisions regarding investments. Neil Hartley (NSW) requested details of the approved investment policy of Croquet Australia. Tony Hall covered the process involved and the current investment arrangements. It was agreed that a policy paper would be prepared and circulated to states. Tony Hall will draft the document.

- Croquet Australia membership figures were presented – membership has increased by 24% nationally over the past 10 years (although it is noted that SA and WA membership has decreased during that period). There is a need to encourage recruitment in the States.
- The Schedule of Prizes was presented – attention was drawn to the increase in prize money for the Men’s and Women’s Championships and the introduction of prizes for the Open Singles Golf Croquet Championship.
- The Schedule of Fees Charges and Honoraria were presented. Tony mentioned that if the deficit cannot be redressed in other ways there may be a recommendation to increase Affiliation Fees next year. The Accommodation Fees for Council Meetings were amended. It was agreed that the Executive should set fees for full recovery of costs of events.
- The Magazine is running at a loss. Wendy Davidson is to be commended for her dedication to the publication over a long time. Judy Fowler (Qld) suggested an electronic copy might be more cost-effective. Gary stated that Croquet Australia cannot continue to run the magazine at a loss. The matter will be considered further.
- It was explained by Gary that the Executive felt there was a need to employ an Administrative Assistant to assist the Secretary – as the incoming Secretary (Creina) is in SA, it was prudent to assess the ability of the SA Croquet Admin Assistant (Cathy Leske) to take on these duties. Creina and Maree will continue to liaise with Cathy regarding the duties. NSW suggested that there was a need for clear direction and set duties.
- The Draft budget was presented – with a deficit of approximately \$13,000.
- A question was raised by Tasmania as to the real need for the Presidents’ meeting. Historically it was thought there was a need for the Presidents in each State to meet to discuss issues. There have been two successful meetings to date. Suggestion: hold the meeting as the need arises. WA suggestion: hold a conference link-up by phone or video. The Draft Budget provides for the States to contribute 40% of the cost for their President to attend the meeting. Tony asked whether the Presidents want the meeting budgeted for or not? The States agreed that they wanted the meeting included in the budget and it was agreed that the Budget would be amended at the AGM.
- The Plenary Session was adjourned for lunch and resumed for a short time at 1pm prior to the start of the AGM.
- Alan Sands, Garry O’Dell and Greg Rowberry joined the session.

- Greg Rowberry asked to be allowed to comment on item 2 of the Agenda – **Insurance** – there is an expectation that there will be an increase of around 10% in insurance costs and therefore premiums will rise.

4. Other Reports – refer AGM

5. Draft Tournament Regulations – referred to Australian Laws Committee for consideration by October 2006. To be considered and a vote taken at next AGM.

6. MacRobertson Shield – Gary thanked QLD and SA for their expressions of interest to host the event. The event will be conducted at Rich River and Shepparton. Six courts at Rich River and 3 courts at Shepparton. The format was outlined. Tournament regulations are being resolved with overseas countries. Referees will be on call for the event.

7. Notices of Motion – referred to AGM

Creina closed the Plenary Session and thanked all present for their attendance.