

Secretary's Report for the 2014/15 Season

An issue has been raised over the last couple of seasons that the decisions undertaken by the committee and how they have been taken has not always been transparent and also that people are not sure exactly what the committee does. As a result, I have decided to prepare a report on what the committee has done over the year to try and combat this observation.

Below are some of the main discussions and decisions that the Committee have made this season:

1. New Constitution documents
 1. I undertook a very large overhaul of the documents and trying to reduce the constitution from 59 pages to around 20.
 2. These have been reviewed by the committee and although there was some discussion about some of the changes; they have broadly been agreed.
 3. A large number of things have been deleted or changed, and these were shown in the circulated document issued with the final agenda.
 4. My suggestion is that we vote to pass the constitution documents for simplification; then if anyone has any issues with some of the things removed/amended; then email the Secretary an amendment after this meeting and it will be debated in the SOSM; rather than reject the new constitution documents.

2. The Student Championships
 1. With the sudden removal of BUCS; the champs itself was under a threat with no organising committee or backing. Our task was to try and factor it in to the BUTBA calendar and make incentives for participation now that BUCS points were removed.
 2. We had several ideas going but the pace of making decisions were quite slow; this resulted in the calling of an EGM to get everyone's opinion on how to proceed.
 3. The result at the EGM was to set up a working group. The minutes of which were published earlier in the year.
 4. Personally, the Committee felt this was a very successful way of deciding the format and the process did end up with a skeleton format within a reasonable time-scale. I would propose that we do the same thing again next year, but earlier in the year – either over the summer; or in September/October to allow an earlier release of entry forms and more time to advertise.
 5. Feedback surrounding the event was positive for the individual finals, but mixed for the points style system which determined the team winners. This will be reviewed in the hopes of simplifying, if a points method is chosen again.

3. The Inaugural Ex-Student Champs
 1. Resulting from the finalisation of the Student Champs, the Committee also organised an inaugural Ex-student Championships which allowed alumni members of universities to re-form and bowl together.
 2. This occurred and although membership was lower than anticipated; the feedback from the event was good and those who participated would participate in a future event.

4. Issues about the style of debate in the committee pages
 1. More of an internal issue, but one which did take up a significant amount of committee time. However, the main result of this was the creation of a code of conduct and a more positive style of discussion which allowed the committee to make decisions faster.

5. Enforcement of policy re Kegel Challenge series patterns
 1. We did have some events this year which did not have oil patterns put down as was agreed at last year's EOSM. The Committee had to decide whether or not any action should be taken for doing this. It was agreed that the guidance discussed and agreed at the EOSM was only advisory so TD's were free to choose whether or not to follow the guidance without retribution.
6. Car & Accommodation Share
 1. The Club Development officer cited issues with some outlying universities in getting to some more difficult venues. It was suggested that the committee should keep a list of those persons who were willing to share transport or accommodation and this should be circulated to help attendance at events
7. Affiliate membership
 1. The Chair will provide an update on this matter later in this meeting.
8. Changes to the Rep Squad
 1. With BUCS removal, the rep squad's validity effectively was removed. The rep squad was very much a BUCS led idea and the squad represented BUCS, rather than BUTBA; hence why the squad was primarily selected from the BUCS champs.
 2. The committee agreed that having a representative squad was a good idea, and that we already had the framework in place for such a squad with the implementation last year of the Ex-student squad.
 3. The committee discussed whether or not the student squad should remain similar to the previously selected one and it was decided that the student squad should be comparable between the two. As a result, the representative programme document was drawn up.
 4. One of the things however it has been observed within and outside the committee is that the squad is not well publicised. This shall be rectified next year, particularly as the squads are now representing the BUTBA tour to the outside world.
9. Cup Format
 1. Frazer, Tom and myself created a working group to discuss various cup formats. We created three different ideas and thought about putting these three to you at this meeting which has been presented with the draft agenda. However, there is one format (the Baker) which we as a group think would be the best idea and this has been fleshed out in more detail and is the proposal which will be discussed later in the meeting.
10. Inclusion of non-ranking event averages in 'BUTBA' average
 1. The committee decided to only include averages from competitive 'in season' matches as the BUTBA average (i.e. Ranking Events; championships and cup). This has been reflected in the new constitution documents.
11. Future committee members
 1. With the large number of committee vacancies which were going to be present at the end of the year, the committee decided it would be best if we try and advertise interest in committee positions for next year, particularly from people who have not been on the committee before.
 2. This had an initial positive response with quite a number of expressions of interest. Unfortunately, for various reasons those expressions have not filtered through to nominations, however it has sparked 4 nominations for the chair position which is quite significant as we need to take a new direction now that we don't have BUCS.

12. Finally, we have fielded several questions from members in the year:

1. Bowler eligibility

1. Exeter

1. Exeter asked whether they would be granted an exemption to the honorary rule, allowing their members to bowl events as honoraries if Exeter had not entered that event to try and increase participation; but to continue to enter as Exeter where they could and gain Team ranking points.
2. This was weighed up and the committee decided against this as it would set a dangerous precedent to other universities. Also, we felt it was a bigger incentive for universities to have to recruit further than allow a small number of bowlers to bowl freelance if they could.

2. UCL

1. UCL wanted to change their registration from their first event. They only had two bowlers (who bowled at Nottingham) and wanted to bowl as honoraries for the rest of the year.
2. The committee stated that this option was available if they forfeited their team points and were happy to not enter another event as UCL in the year which they agreed too. The Committee did compare this to the Exeter case but decided that the key difference between the two was that Exeter wanted to continue to bowl as Exeter, and they wished to hold a rankings event and claim the host contribution. UCL effectively agreed that their initial entry to Nottingham as a club was in hindsight an error.

3. Championships

1. The Committee were asked whether students who had completed a degree and were bowling as an ex-student could bowl in both championships (being the rule which was at BUCS)
2. The committee decided with the introduction of the Ex-student champs, a person should bowl in that event if they were bowling the tour as an ex-student. Also, it was felt that, for this year, if the student stopped being a student prior to the champs, they also should not be allowed to bowl in the event.
3. This has been made much clearer for next year however with the new constitution. Members will decide what type of entrant they are at or prior to the first event – they will then be that status for the rest of the year. Student members are eligible for the Student Championships. Ex-student members are only eligible for the Ex Student Champs. Alumni members are counted as honorary members and therefore will only be eligible to bowl as individual entrants in the Student Championships.

2. Blind scores for tournaments

1. The committee decided that blind scores will continue to be at the discretion of the TD for that event. It was decided against having a consistent approach across all formats as Blind scores would have different effects on different events

3. Lateness of entry forms

1. The Committee acknowledge that some entry forms this year have not been received at the expected time. The Committee will rectify this for the next year and ensure that all entry forms are published no later than 4 weeks prior to the event.

4. Response times to requests from the committee

1. The Committee also acknowledge that it has taken far too long a time to address some questions which have been put to them. The Committee will address this by defining a set procedure for enquires and this will be published at the SOSM.

5. BUTBA's interference with the organisation of member clubs
 1. The committee re-emphasised that BUTBA should have no input into individual member club's internal procedures and structure. As a result, the Committee declined to answer a request from a member club this year and the standing orders which recommend a member club's make up have been removed from the new constitution documents.

6. Entry fees for championships
 1. There was an issue which received a large outcry when the entry forms were first published for the Student Championships. There was a discrepancy between the male and female entry prices of £1 per person.
 2. This was brought to the Committee's attention and was subsequently changed so that the entry forms reflected the same entry fee.