

SUFFOLK COUNTY CHESS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Suffolk County Chess Association, held at the Ipswich Institute on Tuesday 7th June 2016: 7:30 pm

Present –

Rob Sanders (RS): Sudbury
John McAllister (JM); Bob Stephens (BS), Jim Buis (JB), Adrian Sanderson (AS),
Leon Burnett (LB): Manningtree
Melvin Steele (MS), John Lambert (JL): Clacton
Ted Mathewson (TM), Ian Wallis (IW): Michael Cook (MC), Mike Spalding (MS),
Steve Gregory (SG), Kevin Greenacre (KG), Simon Riley (SR): Ipswich
David Brown (DB), Andrew Paige (AP), Malcolm Lightfoot (ML), Arthur McCormick
(AM): Saxmundham
Dave Wild (DW), David Robertson (DR): Felixstowe
Vicky Allen (VA), John Barratt (JB), David Green (DG): Stowmarket
David Wood (DWO), Steve Lovell (SL), Bob Jones (BJ): Bury St Edmunds

1. Apologies for absence

Received from Roger Holt (RH), Tim Lunn (TL): Ipswich
Peter Collicott (PC): Saxmundham
Andrew Lewis (AL): Manningtree
Laurie Pott (LP), John Peters (JP): Bury St Edmunds

2. Minutes of the last SCCA AGM held on 23rd June 2015

BJ asked if there were any queries resulting from these – none.

BJ asked for a proposer & seconder to accept the minutes – proposed by SL,
seconded by TM.

Vote – all in favour of accepting the minutes.

3. Matters Arising

BJ confirmed the minutes from the 2015 SCCA AGM had been sent out in July 2015
and had also been resent in the last couple of weeks to clubs.

No other matters arising.

4. Election of Officers

Nominations had been received for the following posts –

Vice President – LB
County Secretary – KG
Correspondence Captain – BS

BJ asked if there were any other nominations – none.

BJ asked for a proposer & seconder to appoint these posts – proposed by DR,
seconded by ML.

Vote – all in favour of these appointments.

BJ mentioned SCCA still looking for a County 1st Team Captain once IW steps down and a Junior Organiser.

5. Officers' reports

BJ had collated these into a pack and these were distributed to the attendees.

5.1 President (BJ)

BJ congratulated Ipswich C for winning Division 1 and commiserated with Manningtree A.

BJ thanked Ipswich for hosting a number of matches as a neutral venue and also the various clubs he had visited during the season.

A discussion on the SCCA constitution was on the agenda.

BJ thanked everyone for viewing the Suffolk Chess website; this was taking a summer break but would start to be updated again in due course.

BJ also thanked the other committee members for their work during the year.

BJ also thanked TM for acting as the contact point to arrange fixtures at Ipswich as a neutral venue; TM said that he would be passing this onto SG for the upcoming season.

5.2 County Secretary (KG)

As KG had only just taken on this post, no further comments but he was thanked for preparing and distributing the minutes of the recent SCCA committee meeting and for the agenda to the 2016 AGM.

5.3 Treasurer (AS)

AS was pleased to report there was a surplus in the county funds for the year. DW had been invaluable in helping to work out game fees; several players delayed payment of their ECF subs until the second half of the season (total £38) resulting in a total payment of £160 to the ECF being required, the overpayment of £122 is reclaimable by a deduction from the payment to the ECF due in January 2017.

AS said he had been trying to get some information from TL regarding the County Closed Championships; the net cost of these this year had been borne by TL as organiser.

AS was still holding some funds for Suffolk Juniors and no expenses had been claimed by any officer with the exception of a small amount of postage.

The accounts would be audited post AGM.

IW asked if AS knew about any equipment. AS said he knew there were various trophies although the whereabouts of all of these was not currently known. IW said he was trying to help an initiative to create a new Ipswich Junior club but that the available equipment was much less than he had expected so was seeing if anyone knew where this surplus equipment might be.

BJ thanked AS for acting as Treasurer, AS had carried out this work for almost 20 years.

5.4 Competitions Secretary (DG)

DG thanked DW for all the work on the 'fixtures by date' which had been very helpful.

The 2016-2017 season was scheduled to start on 19th September 2016 and DG had contacted Patrick Ribbands (Bury Area Chess League) to let him know.

During the 2015 – 2016 season, there were no real issues involving substitutes and only three players reached the limit of six games to prevent them playing in a lower division.

Regarding re-nominations, DW gets the mid-season grades from the ECF and updates the results website and part of this procedure changes the board order of the nominated players so the highest graded player is on board 1. Changed personnel within a team always needs a renomination but DG said that he was happy to accept that within an otherwise unchanged team, he did not need a renomination when an already nominated player's grade changes, the new board order will just be the numerical order of the player's grades so reduced the need to renominate at all.

No problems with postponements and no penalties this season.

One dispute arose over an interpretation of board order and DG had made a ruling which was confirmed at the recent committee meeting.

DG thanked all team captains for their assistance.

BJ thanked DG for all his work over the season. BJ said he had planned on co-opting RS onto the committee as organiser for the cup events and RS confirmed he was happy to continue in this role.

5.5 Results Officer (DW)

DW in turn thanked DG for his help over the season, all results had been updated. DW mentioned the ECF may be using a new system which could lead to grades being updated more quickly; this was going to tender.

SL said as secretary to the Bury St Edmunds chess club, he had received a questionnaire regarding the grading list and had responded to this.

IW said he had attended the EACU AGM which had mentioned DW's website; there was a concern raised about domain access. The EACU had contacted DW as website covers East Anglia chess. DW will continue to pay for the website; he will also need to appoint a deputy(s) who will have password access to the website ideally one or two people from within the EACU. These people will need a good level of computer experience.

BJ thanked DW for his work and report.

5.6 Women's Organiser (VA)

VA confirmed that there had not been much to organise as relatively few ladies are playing at present which was very sad. There are plenty of girls playing chess at

primary schools in the county but they seem to disappear as they get older. There was no Ladies Championship held and there has been a suggestion to hold a one day quick play event in early 2017 to encourage females to play in this. VA asked everyone to try to encourage ladies to play chess.

BJ agreed it was sad that so few ladies were playing and thanked VA for her work and report.

5.7 Correspondence Captain (BS)

BS advised Suffolk were currently lying second from bottom with five games still in play, probably need 1½ points to avoid relegation. Quite a few defaults had occurred across all three divisions. BS said he would assume everyone would take part in next season's competition unless he was advised to the contrary. Suffolk had only lost one game to date, with ten draws.

IW asked whether John Wharam (Woodbridge School) would be interested in playing next season. JB advised that John is very involved in World Correspondence event at the moment.

BJ thanked BS for his report and also thanked JB who had been correspondence captain for many years.

5.8 County First Team Captain (IW)

IW said that Suffolk had finished second in the EACU table, behind Cambridgeshire, which meant that we had qualified for the national stages of the Minor Counties event. Suffolk had beaten Somerset 14½ – 1½ in the quarter-finals and were playing Norfolk in the semi-final stage at Garboldisham on 21st May 2016. The winner of that match would play either Cambridgeshire or Lincolnshire in the final on 2nd July 2016. This was IW's final season as first team captain and a replacement will be sought.

BJ thanked IW for his report and for acting as first team captain over the last few seasons.

5.9 – Under 160 Team Captain (BJ)

BJ reported it had been a slightly disappointing season. There had been problems getting players and a total of 28 players had represented the county over the six matches; five players had played all six matches. Unfortunately, Suffolk had finished in last place although on the same match points as second-placed Hertfordshire and a highlight was beating Cambridgeshire in the final fixture.

5.10 - Under 120 Team Captain (PC)

As PC had sent in apologies for absence, BJ said that a report from PC on the season was available in the pack.

IW had attended the EACU AGM in 2015 and asked about the Under 100 trophy; Norfolk had said they had handed this to a Suffolk player, possibly from Stowmarket. DG will ask the former county captain for an update; the trophy was not at the AGM so efforts will be made to track this down.

Action Point – (DG) to check whether the Under 100 trophy can be located.

6. Election of Officers

BJ briefly stood down to LB who proposed BJ to be re-elected as President – all in favour. LB handed back the meeting to BJ.

All other officers all standing for re-election – proposed by DB, seconded by MS – all in favour.

7. Presentation of trophies

BJ handed out trophies to the following –

Division 1 – Ipswich C (presented to TM)

Division 2 – Ipswich D (presented to SG to pass on to Alonzo Paez)

Division 3 – Bury St Edmunds D (presented to SL)

Division 1 Player of the Year – Andrew Lewis 9½ / 10 (presented to LB to pass onto Andrew)

Division 2 Player of the Year – Phil Hopkins 9½ / 12 (presented to DR to pass onto Phil) – BJ also congratulated RS on his 100% score

Division 3 Player of the Year – Phil Mortonson & Mike Spalding 9 points each (both presented to MS, to pass one on to Phil)

Under 125 Cup – Bury St Edmunds Oldies (presented to SL)

Suffolk Cup – Manningtree A (no trophy)

Suffolk Plate – Ipswich F (no trophy)

The committee will discuss whether to purchase trophies for the Suffolk Cup and Suffolk Plate.

IW asked whether it would be worth considering presenting a Player of the Year trophy to the highest scorer for the county teams – used to be done. This could be based on playing a minimum number of matches. Again the committee will discuss this at a future meeting.

Action Points (Committee members at future meeting) – to discuss whether to purchase additional trophies for Suffolk Cup and Suffolk Plate and also for Player of the Year trophies for the Suffolk county teams.

8. Proposals

- Rule 3.6 (addition)

DG explained the rationale about adding this rule; he had ruled on a dispute during the season where one team did not have a full team. In the past, the default would have taken place on the bottom board; DG thought the current rule about defaulting was not especially well written so had suggested some clarification.

JL wondered if it was simpler to default from the bottom board; DG said that the rule had been changed for a good reason after being discussed in some detail.

BJ confirmed the proposal was a new rule and not an amendment to the existing rules.

RS thought that when the rule was brought in, he was fairly sure this was already in place in the BACL – defaulting on the board where the player was missing and JL agreed.

SL said that the default should be on the board a player could have played.

RS said it had been left up to captains to some extent but the problem was when teams defaulted boards.

BJ spoke about disputes and DG reiterated the committee had made the decision,

It was also mentioned by an attendees that in other leagues, it was always the bottom board that had been defaulted.

BJ confirmed this could be proposed for discussion at a future AGM.

JL said that Felixstowe had a strong player on board 1 so could nominate to default board 1 to have a better chance on the other boards; SL said that captains must always try to fill their teams.

DG thought that care needed to be taking as it was not good if people were travelling for a match only to find they had no opponent, and the best way to avoid this was not to default on any of the boards. In the previous season, there had been four defaults.

JL replied there had been 10 games defaulted in total.

SL agreed with the content of DG's suggested new rule but thought it would be better to avoid the word 'nominated'. DR said that quite a few nominated players don't play as the nominated four strongest players. RS suggested perhaps going back to defaulting on bottom board

Various amendments to the proposed wording were then discussed; IW wondered whether there had been a previous discussion about whether when a team defaulted, the oppositions had the chance of stepping down.

VA said it was only polite if a team was going to be one short to let the opposing captain know; there would always be occasions when this wouldn't be possible in the event of illness at the last moment etc where there would be little or no time to find a replacement and it would not be possible to advise the opposing captain of this. In these circumstances, she would expect the captain of the team missing a player to apologise. VA said there seemed to be no real problem with this in the lower divisions and was happy with RS's suggestion for rewording slightly.

After discussion, the following wording of rule 3.6 was voted on –

'When a default occurs, the defaulting team captain must tell the opposing captain who the missing player is and must default on the board where that player would have played.

There is no requirement to default on the lower board.

Where both sides have an equal number of defaults then the remaining players must play each other'

Voting for this wording –

In Favour - 13

Against - 0

AM wondered if there was an incongruity in substitutes not having a 10 point difference as this could possibly affect smaller clubs and if not allowed this 10 point difference it could lead to difficulties in obtaining a replacement,

BJ said that any proposals to review rules could be proposed for discussion at a future SCCA meeting.

AM confirmed he had made this only as a comment; BJ said this had been discussed in 2014.

- Rule 5.4 (amendment to table 1)

LB had proposed this amendment; this was an attempt to make a distinction between clubs and teams. The amendment had come from discussion with other clubs and would prevent nominated players for playing for more than one team in a division. DW said this proposed amendment would potentially affect the Ipswich club the most and JL commented that IW had played for three Ipswich teams in Division 1 during the season. DW looked at whether the ability for players to play for more than one team in the same division had affected the result of Division 1; Ipswich C had won the Division as they were always able to turn out their four nominated Division 1 players and if Manningtree or Bury St Edmunds B had played their four players, probably would have won.

TM was part of the Ipswich C team and commented that he felt the rule was very restrictive; with four teams in Division 1 for 2016-2017, it would be hard to get a substitute. He thought it would be difficult to enforce and that Ipswich C had been a consistent team.

DG said he had carried out some analysis and Ipswich C had played their same players 96% of the time and the figure was 90% for the Ipswich club as a whole so he said he felt that Ipswich should be regarded as the good boys.

DB proposed a possible amendment; when he had played back in the late 1970's, there was a rule in place that when a player in a lower division played for a team in a higher division, not just once but two or three times, after 3 games he would be expected to play in a higher division. BJ said this was already covered in the rules.

SG said that the Suffolk Chess League encouraged players to play chess and if the proposed amendment was adopted, he thought it would be difficult for Ipswich for the upcoming season based on four teams in the same division.

AM had looked at rule 5.4 as it stood and thought it was open to possible abuse.

IW was in favour of LB's idea to foster the integrity of a team but there would always be people dropping out so there would be a need to a quick replacement to be found and it was always better to play four against four instead of a default. The amendment would restrict the availability of players; if a player represented one team, he would then be unable to represent another in the same division. IW said he thought the substitution rule was too restrictive.

ML said he thought a practical view was needed; Ipswich had played to the rules and he said he wished his club could have fielded four strong players.

RS said he agreed that only players should play for one club; lots of work had been done on the rules in the past. Rule 5.4 had been a compromise; there were parts of this he liked and other parts he did not; the rule did allow some substitution without making this unlimited and most importantly, he said rule 5.4 worked.

After some further discussion, BJ asked LB to comment as he had proposed the amendment.

BJ wondered what would happen if a club had two teams in division 2; LB said no club had this.

RS suggested a vote to keep rule 5.4 but BJ said the amendment had to be considered first.

LB said if there was some concern about division 2, the amendment could be considered for just division 1.

Two votes then took place, both of which were in favour of adopting the proposed amendment. However, there was a strong sense amongst those attending that it was not entirely clear what they were voting for.

Therefore, after some further discussion, BJ clarified that if the amendment was approved, it would replace two rows on table one and also 5.4 (e), the rest of the rule would remain. If attendees did not want to adopt LB's amendment, they should vote against.

A further vote was then taken on whether to adopt the amendment to rule 5.4 –

For – 9

Against – 11

BJ confirmed that the proposal had been rejected and nothing would therefore change with rule 5.4 remaining unchanged.

9 Constitution

BJ said that a lot of work had gone into the SCCA constitution and hoped that everyone at the AGM would accept it was a good document.

Copies were distributed to attendees.

AS suggested that in Section 8.4 of the constitution, the words 'Where possible' and 'before the meeting' to be excluded.

Section 8.6 had also been missed off but had been agreed at the recent Committee meeting.

VA suggested that a potential Suffolk Ladies chess event needed to be included under 8.6 and AS will add some suitable wording.

The object of 8.6 was to make the Suffolk Closed Championships self funding.

JL asked if each club should be told when committee meetings were being held; BJ apologised for omitting to distribute copies of the constitution before the AGM.

A vote to approve the draft constitution was carried unanimously.

10. Funding of Results System

This had been briefly discussed earlier in the AGM; the Committee had felt that DW should not have to bear the cost of this himself. DW said the costs involved were minimal and thought it was not worth too much effort to take this issue forward and confirmed he did not expect to be repaid; BJ said the Committee were very grateful for DW's work and thanked him again.

11. Teams for next season

DG said he needed to know details of teams by 31 July 2016 and asked for an indication –

Ipswich - 4 teams x division 1;
2 teams x division 3;
2 teams x Suffolk Cup & Plate;
U-125 -? (had joint team with Manningtree last season);
U-145 - ?
1 team in N & S Cup

Bury St Edmunds - 2 teams x division 1;
2 teams x division 2;
1 team x division 3;
2 teams x Suffolk Cup & Plate;
2 teams x U-125;
1 team x U-145 (?);
1 team in N & S Cup

Sudbury - 1 team x division 2;
1 team x Suffolk Cup & Plate

Clacton on Sea - 1 team x division 2;
1 team x U-125 (?)

Manningtree - 1 team x division 1;
1 team x division 3;
2 teams x Suffolk Cup & Plate;
1 team x U-125 ? (had joint team with Ipswich last season)
1 team x U-145 ?
1 team x N & S Cup (?)

Saxmundham - 1 team x division 2;
1 team x division 3;
2 teams x Suffolk Cup & Plate;
? teams x U-125 ?
? teams x U-145 ?

Stowmarket - 1 team x division 2;
1 team x division 3;
1 team x U-125

Felixstowe - 1 team x division 2;
1 team x division 3;
2 teams x Suffolk Cup & Plate
1 team x U-125;
1 team x U-145;

Woodbridge School - Will ask

Hadleigh - Will ask

12 Any other business

RS suggested that the fixture list for the final round of matches should be set; BJ mentioned that efforts had been made in the BACL for inter-team matches not to take place at the end of the season.

BJ had brought along a number of books from Peter Keffler's stock for sale at £1 each.

SL said that Suffolk county teams make their players pay board fees and thought this felt a little odd as no other county captains had to appeal for money from their players; IW said he took the point. BJ said it would be great if players did not have to pay and wondered if there was any possibility of some kind of sponsorship by the SCCA, possibly could discuss this at the next committee meeting.

There being no other business, BJ thanked all attendees and the AGM concluded at 21:52.

Summary of Action Points

(DG) - to check whether the Under 100 trophy can be located.

(Committee members at future meeting) – To discuss whether to purchase additional trophies for Suffolk Cup and Suffolk Plate and also for Player of the Year trophies for the Suffolk county teams

(Committee members at future meeting) – To discuss the feasibility of using reserves to assist in the payment of board fees for county players.