

SURREY DARTS ORGANISATION

SURREY MENS SUPER LEAGUE AGM 2006/2007 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON SUNDAY 6th AUGUST 2006 AT WORCESTER PARK ATHLETIC CLUB

Meeting Commenced: 6:05pm

1 Roll Call

At Roll Call, 12 teams that contested last year's League were represented. These being: Ditton FC, Esher War Memorial Club, Freeholders, Jubilee Club, Metropole, North End Tavern, The Princess, Salfords, St Peters, Worcester Park Athletic, Walton Working Mens Club, Walton Working Mens Club B. Fairlands Club of Guildford arrived later in the meeting.

Apologies for absence were expressed by Martin Cullip for the Golden Lion A as Aline Cook was called to a BDO Executive meeting at short notice.

Persons present: Tim Stedman (Chairman), Martin Cullip (Secretary), Carl Ramsey, Debbie Ramsey, Steve Hayes, Phil Gallagher, Sam Shephard, Richard McLaughlin, Paul Humphreys, Simon Miles, Andy Nye, Vince Harmes, Alan Warner, Bob Howe, Dean Archer, Chris Gallagher, (Trevor Drakeley, Terry Davies).

2 Approval of Minutes

Jim Cullip Proposed that the minutes from last season be approved, Tim Stedman seconded the motion.

3 Secretary's Report

The League Secretary stated that the 2005/6 season had been a success with very little problems apart from the much-publicised one arising from the acrimonious fixture cancellation between Ditton FC & the North End Tavern. Martin stated that the Super League web-site had been a huge success and had cut down on a lot of administration as teams and players had become accustomed to being notified of developments via the site. He also stated that he was very pleased with the success of the laptop result sheets which have enabled so many teams to e-mail their results so quickly.

It was noted that the payout for this year's league was another record with nearly £6,000 paid out on Finals Night. Martin also pointed out that the League's First Prize was now bigger than that offered for the winner of the Champions Cup for which the league winners qualify.

Martin told the meeting that he hoped that 'Toe The Oche' would remain as comprehensive as it has been, but could not rule out the possibility of match write-ups being replaced with something else. Time constraints on the League Secretary were quoted as particular problems. It was hoped that any reduction in quality would be replaced by other features that would take less time to collate.

Martin wished all participants good luck for the coming season.

4 PDPA Players

The League Secretary explained the inclusion of this item as a precaution owing to the fact that the BDO had a meeting the same day that could have resulted in PDPA registered players being excluded from Super League. Martin read the proposal, tabled by Pembrokeshire, to the meeting.

Fortunately, earlier in the day the proposal had been voted down by the BDO Executive by 35 votes to 22 with 3 abstentions, therefore no further discussion was required on the matter.

5 2006/7 League Teams

See Agenda Item 6.

6 League Structure

The League Secretary informed the meeting that there had been approaches from three new teams prior to the meeting which is why there were two agenda items dedicated to deciding the teams to participate & the structure of the league. Considering that there were twelve teams present, with apologies offered for another & a fourteenth team that it was certain would wish to enter, it seemed efficient to tackle both items at the same time.

Martin noted that Andy Nye had asked that the possibility of 'zoning' the League be explored. Andy explained that his side had suffered by the long travel requirements and resultant late nights as his team consisted of players that would have to get up extremely early the next day. Additionally, the long season required from the inclusion of so many teams meant that he had problems with personnel at the start and the end of the season as they had local league commitments particular to his area. He suggested a zonal system that would solve both these problems.

The problems inherent in this system in the past were discussed & while the meeting recognised the problems that Andy faces, and fully sympathised with those problems, the general consensus was to keep the same format as the previous year.

The issue was put to a vote, whereby the idea of zoning was defeated by 11 votes to 1, the Freeholders being the sole objection.

7 Changes to League Rules

The League Secretary stated that there were a few grievances that had been expressed to him throughout the year which needed to be resolved. As such, these matters had been added to the agenda for general discussion.

i) The first concern related to individual league appearances. Many had commented in the previous year that a certain player had only played a couple of games yet was able to enter, and win, the League Singles Title. Martin emphasised that the player in question had done nothing wrong whatsoever & had complied fully with league rules but felt the matter had to be discussed as numerous players were uneasy with the situation and had expressed that view.

The matter was discussed at length and the meeting felt that a rule should be brought in to ensure players played an adequate amount of matches. Richard McLaughlin pointed out that reserves would be unduly penalised by this action & it was decided that any new rule would recognise attendance rather than merely playing. It was unanimously agreed that a new rule be introduced whereby a player will only be eligible for Competitions if they were "Present & Available to Play" for 6 matches or more during the season. Discussion ensued as to how to qualify attendance & it was felt that the best recourse would be that all reserves be noted on result sheets or laptop programs and that it was up to the opposing team secretaries to raise concerns should they feel that the system was being abused.

ii) Rule 4e & 4f relating to postponed or cancelled matches was discussed as the debacle involving Ditton FC & North End Tavern could have been avoided with better rules.

It was accepted that the rules as they stand were not sufficient as they only dealt with the result of such problems and not with the cause. It was proposed that a new rule be entered to clarify the correct avenues by which to proceed if one were to cancel a match.

It was unanimously agreed that the rule should recognise that a match will not be deemed cancelled unless a team secretary had contacted the team secretary of the opposing side, casual talk between players of either team would not constitute a postponement or cancellation. It was recognised that any team secretary could object to a match being postponed or cancelled and any grievances should be directed to the League Secretary.

iii) Rule 5f regarding Super League teams being fined for non-attendance at SDO Council meetings was discussed. The Super League had tabled an amendment of the County Constitution the previous year which had been carried with amendments, which meant that this rule could now be amended to correspond with the updated Constitution ruling.

The League Secretary added that the amended Constitution ruling, by which the Super League must abide, had insisted on a £25 fine for teams that had not attended the County AGM. The Super League rule would be bound to reflect that in future & the 4 teams that were not present at the County AGM would be invoiced £25 each by the County.

iv) The League Secretary suggested that the Competition entry fees might be raised as there had been no such rise in the 6 years in which he had been involved. It was noted that in the meantime, County Qualification entries for such as the Masters, Gold Cup etc. had risen to £5 per player without any corresponding increase in

Super League fees. The matter was left to the floor who agreed readily that an increase was in order & that in the coming season, the entry fees would be £9 per triple, £6 per pair & £5 per single.

8 Any Other Business

Just before Any Other Business was announced, two representatives of the Fairlands Club in Guildford arrived after experiencing extreme problems finding the venue. Having been one of the expected three new teams (Fairlands had e-mailed their interest as far back as March), this caused problems for the meeting as they had staked a valid claim to a place and were present where others were not.

Much discussion ensued as to how to accommodate the new team as it would mean an increase from 14 to 15 teams with a resultant increase in weeks from 26 to 30 taking into account the byes involved. The League Secretary stated that there was very little room for fitting in extra matches, with 14 being difficult already. A large proportion of the meeting were of the opinion that one of the teams not present should forfeit their place to the new team as they were present at the meeting whilst two others weren't.

It was pointed out by Martin Cullip that the Golden Lion A representative had been unable to attend as she was representing Surrey at the BDO Executive meeting in the Midlands and had offered apologies but had stated that another member of the team would attend. He also mentioned that the Lion A had asked that the date of the Super League meeting be changed again to avoid the clash of dates in the first place. Martin also informed the meeting that the Golden Lion Secretary was unable to attend as he was on holiday. Some members mentioned that the web-site had stated that "if you wish to enter a team, it is highly advisable to send a representative to the meeting" and suggested that there were many others that could have attended on behalf of any team. Martin acknowledged that the wording on the site was as such but said that, whereas the previous year it was stated categorically that if a team wasn't represented at the AGM, they wouldn't be admitted, the same wasn't true this year. It was suggested by many that the same was implied in this year's web-site announcement but Martin argued that although that may have been implied, it wasn't categorically stated, wasn't a rule & couldn't be enforced with any fairness. Chris Gallagher added that the exclusion of a team for the whole of the Super League was a very harsh punishment for non-attendance at the AGM.

Tim Stedman expressed the view that he would be uncomfortable with the exclusion of the Golden Lion as they had been involved for many years. He asked the floor if there was a way in which all teams could be accommodated.

Many suggested that the extra weeks could be gained by allowing NO postponements at all, coupled with moving the competitions either to a Sunday, or by using two separate venues for the singles. Paul Humphreys suggested that the summer league be reduced to accommodate the winter league. The League Secretary stated that this would mean that the summer league would have to reduce by two teams. Many were of the opinion that the winter league was of more importance and that this could be achievable. Martin said that this would probably have to be passed through the County Executive as the summer league also required registration with the BDO and as such was probably regulated by the County.

The Secretary asked Chris Gallagher if his team would be adversely affected by a local rival & he replied that he was aware that players would be moving from his side to the new team but that he had adequately replaced them. He did state though that he was of the opinion that, in his previous experience, two teams in Guildford would not be viable.

After nearly an hour of discussion, it was agreed that the League Secretary would look at ways of incorporating 15 teams into the league that would fit into current boundaries dictated by the needs of the summer league. If it was impossible to do so, the new team would, unfortunately and with regret, have to be excluded.

Following this, it was evident that a new rule was required to stipulate that teams must be represented at the Super League AGM as preference for entry to the league would be with those that attend. The recent popularity of the league dictated that this was a measure that needed to be taken immediately. The rule was unanimously agreed.

Once this contentious issue had been dealt with, matters turned to other business.

Carl Ramsey had mentioned during an earlier item that his team wished the rule for awarding points for non-attendance be changed from a statutory 10 (rule 4f) to an average of previous matches. Discussion ensued as to the inequities of such a rule & that in any case, if it came to such a drastic measure, the 10 point penalty would be deserved. The League Secretary noted the concerns of Carl's side, but pointed out that the new rule regarding match cancellations (See 7 i) above) should negate the same unfortunate incident happening again. The meeting agreed to preserve the existing rule.

Martin Cullip then raised the question of the £10 donation to the Youth team that had been customary in the previous two seasons. This had been levied initially in 2004 to help fund the youth sides and was kept in 2005 despite there not subsequently being a youth side arranged. The money last year had been instead added to the Super League prize fund. Martin notified the meeting that a youth side was being gathered for the coming season & asked if the floor was happy with the £10 per team levy staying. The meeting agreed that this extra cost was to remain again this year.

No further business was offered by those present, at which point Tim Stedman proposed that the League Secretary be offered a bigger honorarium for running the league. He stated that the prize money had advanced dramatically since the Secretary's taking over & that, in his opinion, the work involved had led to the league being one of the most lucrative in the country. A suggestion from the floor that the £200 stated in the League rules be increased to £400 was passed without objection.

Just before the meeting ended, Martin Cullip asked that it be approved that instead of paying out all of the money at the end of the season, a float of £100 be kept back for potential mistakes after the league had finished. This had been discussed previously between the Secretary & the Chairman but required the agreement of the floor. There were no objections.

Meeting ended: 8:15pm