



## National Presidents Report

### *WPA Annual General Meeting*

**24th November 2009**

The WPA is now coming to the end of its second year of international recognition and I am pleased to report that the Association's public profile is improving year on year not only here at home but internationally as well.

The Executive continues to endeavour to look after the interests of the membership and to devote time to the needs of the grass root players, this is not always easy, but with each year the Association will accomplish more, it is not always evident, but strong foundations are being laid for the future of the sport in Wales.

I am sure that you will want to join me in congratulating the following members who have been added to our "Role of Honour" during this past year, they are:

Singles Champion:	Steve Brace
Shooting Champion:	Neil Dobbins
Doubles Champions:	Phil Bradshaw and Neil Dobbins
Mixed Doubles Champions:	Gay Evans and Ian Bailey
Triples Champions:	Cryil Royer, Phil Bradshaw and Neil Dobbins
Welsh Cup for Clubs:	The Monkstone PC
Presidents Cup:	Ian Bailey and Phil Bradshaw
Stuart Clarke Cup:	Cyril Royer and Neil Dobbins.

### **2009 Celtic Challenge Winning Team:**

For the 3<sup>rd</sup> successive year Wales has won the Celtic Challenge Trophy and I would like to especially thank the following for their hard won victory in Cork in early May. Jean-Yves Robic, Laurent Mirbelle, Matthew Franks, Paul Bond, Neil Dobbins, Don Jenkins, Ian Bailey, Peter Westall, Jake Caston, Dave Cannan and Jeff Ball.

I wish next year's squad good hunting here in Wales in endeavouring to win the trophy for the 4<sup>th</sup> time. No pressure there!

### **2009 Home Nations:**

I would like to thank all the members who took part in the Home Nations Championships held in Swansea in August. I have it on first hand account that at the English Hotel on the Saturday evening they were seriously worried that we were going to take the trophy away from them for the first time in the competition's history. Unfortunately, it was not to be and England took the title yet again by 5 games. I do feel we under estimate the Team Managers role, this I believe was an integral part of England's success and something we must review.



# Welsh Pétanque Association

## **2009 EPA Inter-Regional Championships:**

As in previous years after winning promotion to Division 1 we were unable to retain our position after finishing in 7<sup>th</sup> place, and we were relegated back to Division 2. My thanks go to all the teams that took part in the Inter-Regional Championship.

The four teams that qualified for the Challenge Cup fared a little better finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> below Chiltern and Kent, again my thanks go to all the players.

This list of accomplishments would not be complete without adding to it our members who have represented the WPA and Wales at International events this year.

## **International Representation:**

It was a little disappointing that the number of teams that qualified for Invitations on mainland Europe did not take up the offer; this is something that the Vice-President Playing needs to investigate further.

In July, a Welsh team, comprising Matthew Franks, Phil Bradshaw, Neil Dobbins and Cyril Royer, with Coach Derek Jones competed in the first European Championships for Men held in Niece. The remit for the team was simple, to achieve a qualifying place for Wales in the 2010 World Championships in Chinese Taipei. I am very happy to report that this goal was achieved by the team.

In October our Junior Welsh Team, comprising Katie Gregory, Jesse Lepitz-Robic, Rhydian Lee and Sam Lepitz-Robic travelled to Monistir in Tunisia to play in Wales' first Junior World Championships. They were accompanied by Scott Murray our YDO and Alison Gregory and Jean-Yves Robic. I hope that they all found the experience beneficial and made many new friends in the process. I would like to take this opportunity in congratulating the team on their performance and especially to Rhydian Lee for his performance in the Shooting Competition.

Finally, our female Welsh Team, comprising Gemma Foster, Barbara Vaughan, Gay Evans and Gill Brace, have or are just returning from Thailand from what I believe to be a very successful first World Championships, they had two notable wins over the USA and Monaco, but couldn't take revenge against New Zealand, however, there will be a few New Zealand shirts on the pistes next season. Again, I hope that they all found the experience beneficial. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulating them on the amount of money raised to get them to Thailand, an example to us all.

## **CEP and FIPJP Congress**

The CEP Congress in Niece passed off with little or no affect financially on our association due the size of our membership.

One issue brought to the Floor by Sweden was the decision of the CEP Executive to make the European Championships for men and not open as is the World Championships. It was felt by a number of parties this was a backward step and penalised countries with a small membership.



# Welsh Pétanque Association

The general consensus was that both ladies and juniors have had their own competitions for a number of years, but men have not and it was time for this discrepancy to be resolved.

Loek van Tiggelen spoke in defence of the only decision and stated that the Euro Cup provided the male/female mix, which could potentially be developed to enhance this mix.

The FIPJP Congress in Thailand, allowed the Executive to explain to the member federations present the type of activities and developments undertaken since the last congress in 2008.

The one issue that will affect all federations is that of anti doping, the FIPJP is moving ahead with this measure. A number of points were raised:

- From 2010 inhalers are banned, if they are required by a player for a medical condition then they will require a medical certificate.
- Drops used for the nose cannot be used 24 hrs prior to a competition.
- Any medication used by a player must be assessed prior to a competition.
- If any player exceeds the alcohol limit, they will now be excluded from the competition.

As an association we now need to look at anti-doping more seriously and provide support and advise for our members.

In the future there will be a new level of Umpire – Continental, e.g. European, Asian etc. At this time details of this new qualification has not been circulated.

Two other matters that can have an influence on our Association:

1. Foreign players are still allowed in National Teams.
2. The decision to make the 2010 World Championships closed to men only was deferred to the next congress, therefore the next World championships will be open, and therefore teams can comprise men, women and possibly juniors.

## **Matters Closer to Home:**

The detailed financial accounts for the past three years have given the Executive a better understanding of the cost of running the association. The accounts for the past two years have highlighted the cost of formal recognition and affiliation to the FIPJP and the CEP. The Executive over the next year and before the AGM in 2010 must review the membership structure and propose an alternative structure to the membership to ensure the financial future of the association. If this is not resolved then the association will have insufficient funds to continue.

Clubs must encourage its members to become more involved in the supporting the association by becoming Coaches and Umpires, the association needs each club to have a qualified Coach and Umpire as a matter of urgency, I would also say that each club should have a competition organiser, it shouldn't be left to the few, but spread out over the many.



## Welsh Pétanque Association

We need the Association to grow. The Executive can provide literature and liaise directly with clubs, however, again it is the clubs and their teams that can encourage non-affiliated clubs and teams they play against to join the WPA, and it is all our best interests to encourage this.

I would encourage the new Executive to review the Constitution to ensure that it is working for the membership. There are elements of the constitution that are I believe unnecessary and would if they became reality, damage the structure of the Association, rather than enhance it.

I would like to thank Don Jenkins who is standing down this year, as we know he has a home in France and he is now spending more time there.

It also goes without saying that I would like to thank all the current members of the Executive for their hard work during the past 12 months.

As I stated last year the WPA exists to serve its members by providing the opportunity to play at all levels. We are now beginning to see this happening, but we must encourage more of our members to take part in competitions to ensure that the WPA is a success.

Thank You.

Tony Smith  
National President