



## GENERAL MEETING

**Date:** Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2009

**Time:** 07:40pm

**Venue:** Wenvoe Arms

**Present:** Tony Smith, Don Jenkins, Peter Westall, Derek Jones, Scott Murray, Graham Atfield.

**Representatives from the following clubs:** Creigiau, Wheatsheaf, The Barn, Cardiff Bay, Monkstone, Penarth, Wenvoe, a total of 11 members.

**Apologies:** John Legge, Phil Bradshaw, Jean-Yves Robic and Bob Pugh.

**Previous Minutes:** The minutes of the general meeting held at Wenvoe Arms on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2009 were agreed, proposer Judith Smith, seconded Dave Cannan.

**Matters Arising:** A document has been prepared and circulated laying down a policy regarding the display of sponsorship names/logos on official WPA shirts, this is based on a CEP statute. This document has been approved by the Executive, has been passed to the Vice-President (Playing) who has communicated it to teams Wales 1 to Wales 6 and is available on the web site for other members to see.

A job description for the role of National Sponsorship Officer has been prepared and circulated to the membership.

The letters from Jean-Yves Robic have been responded to.

**President's Report:** Tony Smith offered congratulations to the winners of the various WPA Championships; to the team Wales 1 for their efforts in Nice gaining Wales a place in the 2010 World Championships; also to the Welsh squad which played in the Home Nations at Swansea, at one point being only three points behind the English squad and finishing only five points behind them, the closest ever finish in this competition – we can now look forward to next year and Inverness.

The 2010 World Championship is currently listed as being in Taiwan but will probably be transferred to Japan. The CEP have confirmed that the European Junior Championship 2010 will be held in July in Brittany and the ladies European Championship 2010 will be held in August in Slovenia.

The CEP has moved to a single sex Championships for the main event, rather than having a main championship that is mixed sex. They have also agreed to amend their funding of officials so that the CEP bear the main part of the funding rather than the officials national association. The minutes of the CEP Congress 2009 are available on request.

**Secretaries Report:** Graham Atfield reported that the Association is receiving an increasing number of invitations to events in Europe, the latest being an event in Antalya, Turkey; it was agreed that these invitations would be circulated to the membership through the Vice-President (Playing).



**Treasurers Report:** Peter Westall reported that the current balance was £10,690, but there were outstanding payments in respect of the European Championship in Nice and the Home Nations which would reduce the balance to around £7,000. In discussion it was accepted that there was a balancing act between income and costs which may lead to some difficult decisions in the next few years.

**Home Nations 2009:** The Welsh squad performance and costs of the event had already been discussed, it was agreed that for those actually running the event it had been a difficult job and a lot of hardwork, but the event had been a success. Now we have to look forward to Inverness next year and consider and agree funding for the teams attending this event.

### **Potential League Rules changes:**

**1. (Rule 2.1) - There should be a clarification of the "3-game rule", its applicability to League/Cup/Plate matches, and if we are going to allow players to play in the League/Cup/Plate under this "rule" it should be documented.**

There was a lengthy discussion on this issue, Alison Walton stating that this issue had been clarified at a league team captains meeting several years ago, that players were allowed to use the taster game rule to play in league/cup matches. There was a general disagreement about this as there are some clubs which do not have a regular meeting at which prospective members can have these taster sessions; the view was expressed that participation at social sessions does not give a prospective member a proper idea of full competitive play, this was better done through participation in a league match; another view expressed was that club open competitions could be declared as taster sessions but this was countered by the argument that these were intense events, normally only attended by the better players and therefore more likely to dissuade beginners. It was agreed that each club must keep a formal register of taster sessions, and attendance at such by non-WPA members, for insurance purposes. A straw poll was taken: In favour of barring taster sessions from League/Cup matches – 11; Against – 3; Abstain – 3.

**2. (Rule 2.6 to 2.8) - Where a Club has more than one Team in a particular Division players may NOT play across. Teams must have 4 players registered before the start of the Season to enter the League.**

**Any player who plays up from a lower Division will be "tied" to the Team in the higher division, and may not play up for another Team. They can still play for their original Team, but are subject to Rule 2.8**

**Any "reserve" player (i.e. a qualified player who is not registered with a Team at the start of the Season) is "tied" to the first Team they play for. If this is a Team in a lower Division they can still play up subject to the other Rules.**

There was a lengthy discussion on this issue as well; it was suggested that if these rules changes are imposed clubs entering more than one team would have to restrict the number of teams, this resulting in more players per team, playing fewer matches and possibly leaving the sport in dissatisfaction; it was also suggested that clubs which have entered more than one team with insufficient players to support them have been fielding the same players for every team; there was no unanimity on this issue but it was agreed that to impose all three proposals would be too rigid. There was no straw poll taken on this issue.



**3. Postponement of Fixtures (Rule 5) - It should not be possible to postpone fixtures. If a Team fails to turn up for a fixture the opposing Team should be awarded the match 4 (52) - 0 (0). Fixtures can be played early with agreement of both Teams in order to take account of holidays or other foreseeable events.**

In discussion it was agreed that team captains should be aware of when they are going to have difficulties fielding a team during the season and plan ahead, preferably playing a fixture ahead of the due date rather than postponing; it was also accepted that opponents are sometimes too lenient when a captain postpones a match and the existing rules should be enforced. Straw polls were taken: In favour of barring postponement of League/Cup matches – 0; Against – 17; Abstain – 0: In favour of awarding a 4-0 win when opponents fail to turn up for League/Cup matches – 5; Against – 8; Abstain – 4.

**4. Cup/Plate - At present, entry to the League includes automatic entry to the Cup/Plate competition. Teams should have the ability to opt-out of these competitions, but only prior to the commencement of the Competition.**

There was a short discussion on this issue, it had been the practice when there was a split fee to enter the League and Cup that teams entering the League could opt out of the Cup competition and not pay the fee; there was general agreement that if a team wished to opt out of the Cup competition they should be allowed to do so. A straw poll was taken: In favour of allowing a League team to opt out of the Cup competition – 17; Against – 0; Abstain – 0.

An additional point was raised, that when the League/Cup programme is published only the Cup preliminary round should be published; after the preliminary round, when it is known which teams are in the Cup and which in the Plate, the rest of the Cup/Plate programme could be published. There was general agreement to this point.

**National Sponsorship:** Tony Smith reiterated that the job description for a National Sponsorship Officer had been circulated but that there had been no response from any member, he asked that if any member knew of a suitable candidate they should encourage them to come forward. In discussion it was agreed that the current economic climate would make finding a sponsorship partner a difficult issue.

**AoB:** Gaye Evans raised the issue of the date of the Celtic Challenge Qualifier, this had been transferred from August to October, she asked why this was necessary and could it be moved to an earlier date in the calendar to avoid inclement weather. It was stated that the transfer was to allow players in Teams Wales 1 to 6, who had been given invitations to European events in August, the option to play in the Celtic Challenge Qualifier; this was supported by Diane Westall who said that Wales should be represented by the strongest team possible; Don Jenkins said that Panteg could be approached to change the swap with the Panteg Triples: Tony Smith said that we could look at swapping the event with the Presidents Cup; this matter would be considered further.

Alison Walton raised the issue of representation at International level and the selection of a fourth player where the team qualified with only three. Tony Smith stated that the teams were paying their own way, the WPA did not have the financial resources to pay for team attendance or to subsidise team attendance, therefore the choice should be left with the team; Derek Jones stated that he was at the European Championship in Nice as coach, the selection of the fourth player was justified in the end as he played very well when called upon; Tony Smith supported this and said that if we had only had a three player



team at Nice, following a dip in form of one of the three, which resulted in a substitution, we may not have qualified for the World Championship 2010; Dan Murphy stated that if a member plays in the qualifiers they are eligible to be selected as the fourth player irrespective of where their team qualified.

The meeting closed at 09:15pm.