



**The WCF Management Committee
Report: 2008 - 2009 (part)**



Presented by the WCF Secretariat to the 13th WCF Council Meeting, to be held on 12th May 2009 in West Palm Beach, Florida, USA in pursuance of Article 107 of the WCF Statutes.

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The World Croquet Federation Management Committee Report

Foreword

This is the WCF Secretariat report covering the period 2008 to 2009 (part) outlining all WCF Management Committee (WCFMC) activity since the date of the 12th WCF Council Meeting held on 6th February 2008.

Work has continued in the development of the organization since the last report and the decisions taken at the last council meeting.

This has largely been enhancing existing processes and protocols to ensure that WCF is in a robust position to meet the aims and objectives laid down by its founding fathers in 1986.

We have also worked on an increasing number of development projects and we see this as an increasingly important aspect of the work of the WCF.

WCF has been in dialogue with the larger member associations concerning a number of important issues that continue to dominate the WCF agenda.

These include:

- control of the Laws of the Games;
- further involvement in the MacRobertson Shield
- adoption of a new World Team AC Championship format;
- the World Anti-Doping Agency code.

WCFMC membership. February 2008 – May 2009

David Openshaw (England) – President (Retires by rotation December 2009)

Keith Aiton (Scotland) from 1st January 2008 (Retires by rotation 2011).

Carole Jackson (South Africa) (Retires by rotation December 2009)

Charles Jones (New Zealand) (Retires by rotation December 2011)

Max Murray (Australia) (Retires by rotation December 2009)

Amir Ramsis (Egypt) (Retires by rotation December 2009)

Rhys Thomas (USA) (Retires by rotation December 2011)

Andrew Hope (Scotland) (Treasurer)

Brian Storey (England) (Secretary-General)

WCF Regulations

WCF Sport Regulations

Following the 2008 WCF World AC Championship in New Zealand and the 2008 World GC Championship in South Africa, WCF undertook a wide ranging consultation of the WCF Sports Regulations.

Many players from around the world contributed to that consultation and in turn this has led to a number of changes to those regulations including, a clearer indication of how allocations were made and wild cards were accepted.

There were also ancillary matters considered to correct errors in the regulations and also address matters relating to seeding.

WCF Equipment Regulations

At the time of writing this report, it is anticipated that the technical specification of hoop upright widths will be increased to take account of changes to the Laws of AC introduced in 2008 and also allow for stronger hoops to be manufactured to partly alleviate the long term problem of hoop rigidity.

WCF Development Regulations

Application activity for WCF development funding continues to be sluggish. This is despite many attempts to get smaller member associations to consider ways in which WCF can assist them in attracting new members, retain existing ones or develop infrastructure projects.

It is perhaps indicative of the fragile state of some smaller members that such applications have not been forthcoming and it continues to be of concern.

In the report period WCF completed awards for:

Germany CA – For the holding of a two day AC Laws Course in Dalum, Germany

Finland CA – For translation of Laws and Rules of AC and GC into the Finnish language (£500 GBP)

Egypt CF – For development of two lawns (£5000 GBP)

During the year a major opportunity was taken as a first step to establishing croquet in China. We are hopeful of progress with this project.

In the pipeline and being considered is an application from Japan CA for purchase of equipment to supplement coaching courses. The amount requested is £2000 GBP.

The WCF was involved in the International Challenge match between Egypt and the Rest of the World team in London for the Amir Ramsis trophy.

This event proved very successful and was narrowly won by the RoW team. We hope this prestige event will be the forerunner of an expanded international team competition in Golf Croquet. Finances to fund this match were raised from the Egyptian Croquet Federation, a number of individuals within the croquet community and the WCF funded the trophy and part funded the air fare of two players from the Rest of the World team. The cost of the WCF funding was £1175 GBP.

WCF Hall of Fame Regulations

Since its formation in 2005, The WCF Hall of Fame concept has been met with much appreciation from those who have joined the growing list of worthy persons and those who have promoted their inclusion.

By nature, croquet is a conservative sport, not accustomed to large overblown examples of advertising and largely because of that many people who have assisted in the development of the game or have been successful in playing the sport have sometimes not been known outside their own associations.

Member associations and players from around the world are encouraged to make nominations for future inductions.

A plea

Finally, member associations are encouraged to make recommendations for the continued improvements of existing regulations or forming ideas for new ones.

WCF Events

2009 will be a busy year for WCF with the playing of:

- Women's GC (Australia);
- Under 21 GC (Egypt);
- European Team AC/GC (England);
- AC Championship (USA).

All of these carry with them a significant resource implication not only for



the host association but also the WCF Presidency and Secretariat.

WCF Business Plan 2009

The following plan was agreed by the WCF Management Committee in Dec 2008:

1. Events

Hold the following Events during 2009:

WCF AC World Championship Florida - May 2009

European Team Championship Cheltenham - June 2009

Under 21 World GC Championships Cairo - July 2009

WCF Women's World Championship Melbourne - November 2009

2. Schedule of Forward Events:

We will extend the existing Forward Schedule of Events as follows:

Agree with ACA details of the WCF AC World Championships - 2011/2012

Need to find venues for next two WCF GC World Championships - 2011 (preferred bidder CA) and 2013.

Need to confirm next WCF AC World Championships - 2013 with preferred bidder (CA of England)

Need to find venue for next WCF Women's World Championship - 2011.

Review European Team Championship - Hold again in 2011?

3. Key Activities

1. Continue the development of the WCF as a full governing body by:

a) Continue discussions with ACA, CA, CNZ and USCA on relationship of WCF, MacRobertson Shield and WCF AC World Team Events.

b) Develop possible formats for a World Team Championship and agree way forward.

c) Consider position of AC Rules and WCF relationship to ILC (Probably a 2010 activity).

2. Succession planning for WCF President, Treasurer, and Secretary General.

3. Follow up possible membership Denmark, Pakistan

4. Follow Up: China Development

5 WADA: follow up discussion and agreed action from the 2008 Council Meeting and feedback during 2008.

6 Further work on the Big Ask Feedback.

7 Further Expansion of the WCF Development Programme: We need a strong effort in first Qtr 2009 to encourage more members to use our development programme.

8 Review of WCF Regulations

9 Further work on translation of croquet information into more languages.

10 Develop a policy or guidance that embraces players who suffer from disabilities and how they may enjoy the sport without unfair disadvantage or advantage to able bodied players.

The updated WCF Business plan can be found at:

<http://www.wcfcroquet.org/Files/WCF-Business-Plan.pdf>

WCF Web Site



The WCF web site continues to grow in size and attracts more visitors than ever.

In 2008 the newly refreshed site saw the number of pages of information pass 1000. These carry information as diverse as News, WCF constitution, underlying regulations, tournament calendar and player profiles of those that have played in recent WCF events.

Most sites jealously guard the demographics of visitors, but we are

pleased to say that in the year of 2008 the WCF site attracted:

- 18,884 unique visitors;
- 15,438 of them returning visitors;
- from 143 countries;
- 74% using MS Internet Explorer;
- 20% Firefox;
- 4% Safari;
- 93% using MS windows;
- 5% Macintosh.

Overall, given the relatively small number of devotees to the sport, we can be pleased at this response.

However many players within the croquet playing community are not web enabled and WCF then relies on the printed word to circulate important information via Member Associations through their own periodicals. They were circulated with over 60 news items for their consideration.

In June 2008 an important enhancement was made to the WCF web site with the enabling of "Browsealoud" which reads web pages (including Word Documents and PDF files) aloud for people with literacy and visual impairments.



The world-wide croquet tournament calendar

continues to grow with now more than 950 events listed in over 300 venues.

More and more multi-lingual documents are appearing on the site and with help and assistance of enthusiasts; more are planned for the future.



Aesthetic and practical improvements will continue to be made in the future.

Overall the development of the site can be viewed in positive terms and must remain as a long standing feature of future development of the WCF.

Laws and Rules of the Games

In 2008, at the last WCF General Meeting, a motion by the Australian Croquet Association to bring the International Laws Committee (ILC) for Association Croquet, under the remit of the WCF, was considered.

Although it was rejected by members in its proposed form, it did spark a significant amount interest and brought to the fore the underlying purpose of WCF itself and how it actually interacts with the game and one of its most influential variants.

Consequently, a lot of work has been undertaken by WCF and the major associations that form the ILC to consider future implications and safeguards of such a move.

Suffice to say that it is expected that this matter will be considered further at the 2009 WCF General Meeting for consideration of a practical proposal along those lines later in the year.

World AC Team Championship

Over the last four years there have been discussions amongst players, associations and WCF to consider the best mechanism to integrate a WCF World AC Team Championship.

Historically, in 1996 the four playing associations of the MacRobertson Shield Tournament, made application to WCF to call that event the "World Team Championship". This led to considerable debate about the "closed" nature of that event and the cost of such a title being attached to it. Eventually in 2004, that was finally resolved with acceptance by WCF of such a title and a representation of WCF on the organizing committee.

Since then, more work has gone on, behind the scenes, to consider a more fully integrated World Team Championship incorporating all WCF member associations based on a variable number of players, divided into tiers or divisions, with promotion and relegation between them except the top tier.

At the time of writing this report it is expected that this matter will be considered further at the 2009 WCF General Meeting for consideration of a practical proposal along those lines later in the year.

Allocation to WCF Championships

Over the years, most WCF Championships utilize a system of allocated number of places to member associations. This is normally upon a perceived strength in depth of a particular association. Sometimes (AC) it is ranking based sometimes (GC) it is based on estimated strength. Some events have been Open in aspect. (European Team) (Under 21 GC).

Experience has shown that allocations do not in themselves manifest unfairness, but may do so if all or the large majority of top players in a discipline made themselves available to play. It is a fact that due to withdrawals, more Wild Cards are eventually processed than anticipated and the 2009 AC Championship is a prime example of that.

The CA (of England) are considering proposing that WCF moves to a largely ranking based system that would effectively mean it being brought into line with most existing tournaments around the world, with an allocation date and final closing date based purely or mainly on the ranking of an individual player, but with safeguards to protect the concept of representation for all full and associate member associations. Observer associations would continue to be eligible only on a discretionary basis.

At the time of writing this report it is expected that this matter will be considered further at the 2009 WCF General Meeting for consideration of a practical proposal along those lines later in the year.

World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)

In 2005, the WCF Council asked the WCF Management Committee to make recommendations for adopting, or otherwise, WADA protocols and becoming a signatory to them.

In 2008 a comprehensive report on the matter was produced for WCF member consideration and once again it was remitted back for further consideration.

In the course of time since then, it has become apparent that there exists little support from WCFMC and the wider membership to seek to become a WADA signatory, certainly at this time.

Of the four member associations that do or purport to support WADA protocols only two have indicated their support for WCF becoming a signatory. In addition, WCFMC is divided on the issue with only a minority in support of such an idea. A majority want to keep the status quo of supporting those members who have adopted the protocols.

The upshot of this is that there is a motion proposed by the CA (of England) that there will be no further consideration of the matter in the foreseeable future.

Individual member associations will be free to develop their own protocols or sign up to WADA as they see fit but there will be no central "control" of the matter from WCF.

The adoption by UN member states of the "*UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport*" highlights the potential problems ahead. All nation states of WCF member associations have now signed the convention and it is only a matter of time before domestic legislation in those countries forces sports to join the WADA protocols on a formal footing.

Without WCF involvement, Anti-Doping in the sport will continue in an ad-hoc and without joined-up consideration.

Finances

The WCF has adopted a conservative approach over the years and has a healthy surplus. This will allow it to continue to function over a number of years into the future however uncertain the economic environment becomes. It also provides a contingency fund to cover any serious unforeseen problems.

The finances have been helped over a number of years by members of the WCF MC not claiming honoraria or claiming expenses

In 2008 we continued to increase the amount we spent on development. 2009 will see a further increase.

Nevertheless, careful management, particularly by the Treasurer and the WCFMC, has maintained a good positive balance.

Currently the 2008 accounts are being considered by the auditors but it is hoped to present them at the WCF Council Meeting.

WCF Membership

Currently there are 26 member associations in WCF.

WCF has had contacts from Pakistan, India and Nigeria. These have been no more than information requests to recognize a particular group of people as a national croquet association, despite the fact that they cannot produce any evidence of croquet actually being played in those nation states. Needless to day, the requests have been declined but with encouragement to form clubs and eventual association for future recognition.

WCF is also mindful that in some nation states, the fact that such titling is awarded allows individuals to access central funding without actually having to do any work or develop any infrastructure.

Consequently WCF will remain guarded about accepting future applicants for membership.

WCF Nationality and Eligibility

In 2008 after considerable debate a revised WCF Nationality and qualification statute was enabled.

At the time of writing this report one appeal against a decision taken by a member association is being considered by WCF. Its outcome will be an opportunity to set a clarification or precedent for the future application of the current wording.

One related matter that was not considered is the position of players of countries that either split or join with others into separate or one larger country.

WCFMC has proposed a motion to cover this aspect that protects players for the future.

Conclusion

The WCF gathers strength, not only financially but in supporting its membership in practical ways.

However, the position remains, as in 2008, that these are testing times for the organization which still finds itself at a cross-road of either being just another event holder or an International Sport Federation.

The matters that are to be discussed at the WCF Council meeting are of fundamental importance to WCF, how it is perceived now and how it will develop in the future.

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