

Minutes of the 43rd Annual General Meeting of the EUROPEAN SQUASH FEDERATION

HERNING, DENMARK
SATURDAY 2nd MAY 2015

1. PRESIDENT'S WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

- a) The President, Zena Wooldridge, opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees, who introduced themselves
- b) The President explained the AGM programme for the morning, and Team Championships Finals schedule
- c) Voting Procedure:

The President advised that item 10.1 requires a 75% majority as it proposes a change to the articles. The other 2 motions require a 50% majority.

Jan Weber (ASB) and Michael Khan (observer) were appointed as scrutineers for the Board elections.

The President explained she had been made aware of 2 concerns amongst Member representative regarding the election process for Vice-Presidents, which wanted to address at the outset of the meeting. The first concern related to the absence of 3 of the 4 nominees to address the AGM. This was confirmed by the meeting. The President suggested that, although it would be difficult to make it a condition of standing to be present at the AGM, in future the pre-nomination notification should include a strong recommendation that candidates attend.

The second concern related to an apparent lack of notification of the number of vacancies and gender balance for Vice-Presidents accompanying the nomination forms; as well as a notification that Reidun Ribesen would not be standing for a second term. This concern was in the light of there being only one female nominee, who would therefore be elected by acclamation. In response, reference was made to supporting information circulated on 13th December with the election documentation which stated the number of vacant positions, and the minimum gender balance. On that basis the President suggested there was insufficient reason to delay or defer the election for Vice-President, and sought the view of the meeting to proceed as per standard process. 11 voted in favour, 5 against and 1 abstention.

The President reiterated that in future ESF will strongly encourage candidates standing for election to be present at the AGM. But it would ultimately be their choice.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Member Nation Associations:

Croatia
Cyprus
Hungary
Liechtenstein
Monaco
Turkey

Other apologies:

Mr N Ramachandran, President WSF
PSA

3. ATTENDANCE

a) Member National Associations Represented

Delegates were present from:

Austria	Daniel Haider
Belgium	Serge Maggi
Czech Republic	Tomas Cvikl
Denmark	Tom Kjaerbye Larsen
England	Peter Goldson
Finland	Poku Salo
France	Dominique Fontanon
Germany	Stephen Mann
Gibraltar	Barry Brindle
Israel	Moshe Avraham
Italy	Davide Babini
Netherlands	Paul Gardner
Norway	Rik Burger
Poland	Tomasz Banasiak
Portugal	Luis Ferreira
Sweden	Bjorn Strandberg
Switzerland	Pascal Bruhin

b) Observers Present

England	Keir Worth
Germany	Volker Bernardi

c) Others Present

By Right

ESF President	Zena Wooldridge
ESF Vice-President	Reidun Ribesen
ESF Vice-President	Jacques Fontaine
ESF Vice-President	Pavel Sladeczek
ESF Vice-President	Marcel Borst
ESF Treasurer	Peter Derrick

By Invitation

ESF Office Manager	Zoe Reece
ESF Office Assistant	Jody Jones
ESF Coaching Director	Michael Khan
ASB	Jan Weber

4. MEMBERSHIP STATUS

The list of members was supplied as an appendix for information and there were no questions.

5. APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

The President advised that Belarus applied for membership and submitted all required documents on time.

All MNAs voted in favour of accepting Belarus as a member

England's representative commented on the low level of representation (17) at the AGM as a proportion of total membership (now 45 nations). The President confirmed that 10 is quorum, and that proposals later will try to address that concern.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 42nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The minutes were approved as a correct record with no comments or questions.

7. THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD

The annual report received no comment or questions from Members.

The President made reference to the breadth of ESF's delivery on a relatively small budget of approximately €140,000 and an impressive commitment from its network of dedicated expert volunteers. She also made reference to the contribution ESF is making to WSF, in areas such as coaching and refereeing.

The annual report for 2014 was approved unanimously

8. FORWARD PLAN 2015/16

The President stated that there are a number of areas of expanding activity – championships, masters, U23's, coaching and refereeing. With no additional resources, this is happening mainly due to increased input from volunteers. Ms Wooldridge commented ESF is restrained by resources and needs more volunteers. No comments or questions were raised.

The forward plan for 2015/16 was adopted unanimously.

9. FINANCE

a) To adopt the accounts for the year to 31st December 2014

The Treasurer apologised for the amendment to page 3 as the original included a small error, although the bottom line was not affected. He commented that the overall result showed a healthy surplus of €28,000, €12,000 more than original budget. This was due to an underspend in the Junior and Referee Committees and a saving on office overheads. Otherwise the expenditure for the year was in line with the budget.

The Treasurer also made reference to ESF's reserves, and the improvement over the last 2 years from the worrying low level of €7,000 three years ago. The current level of €67,000 is a more comfortable situation. He cautioned however that the current year is likely to sustain a deficit due to heavy exchange rate losses. This is an example of why a healthy reserve is necessary.

The Treasurer stated that the accounts show a true and fair view of the overall financial position of ESF and have been independently scrutinised. He expressed thanks to Paul Gardner and Moshe Avraham for acting as internal examiners. He also expressed his thanks to Jody Jones who does the accounting throughout the year.

No questions were raised.

The accounts for the year 2014 were adopted unanimously

b) To appoint two Internal Examiners for the 2014 accounts

Stephen Mann (Germany) and Paul Gardner (Netherlands) were appointed as internal examiners for the 2015 accounts.

c) To receive the Budget for the financial year 2015

The Treasurer stated that an increase in membership fees is determined by the inflation position in the UK and by the exchange rate. For 2015 this resulted in a 7.3% increase at the time the budget was determined by the Board in late November 2014.

The Treasurer also commented that he expects to see a fall in SPIN revenue; and that the significant shift in the euro-pound exchange since the budget was set has resulted in an initial budget surplus of €6,000 now being in deficit for 2015.

No questions / comments were received. The Treasurer asked for the budget to be approved.

The Budget 2015 was approved unanimously

The President expressed her thanks to Peter Derrick and Jody Jones for their work on ESF's finances, and to Jody Jones for her diligence in chasing ESF's outstanding invoices.

10 MOTIONS CONCERNING GENERAL MATTERS

10.1 Motion – Management Board

Proxy Voting

This motion comprised 2 inter-related parts:

Part A relates to the proposal to change the Articles to make provision proxy voting.

Part B relates to the proposal to then create a Members' Meeting/Forum alongside the AGM.

Part A requires a 75% majority to change the articles.

10.1 Part A ~ Provision for Proxy Voting

The European Squash Federation is registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee in the UK. It is therefore subject to the provisions within the Companies Acts 2006, which includes the right of Members to appoint a proxy to speak and vote on their behalf at a General Meeting.

Proxy voting is a form of voting whereby some members of a decision-making body (in this case ESF) may delegate their voting power to other members of the same body to vote in their absence.

The current ESF articles do not make provision for Members to appoint a proxy, and we need to do so. By not making such a provision makes the Company and its Directors liable to a fine, and possible removal as a Director.

*This motion proposes a change to the ESF Articles of Association to include a provision for Members to appoint a proxy for General Meetings. The proposed changes are highlighted in **appendix G**.*

10.1 Part B ~ Provision for Proxy Voting

The second, inter-related part of this motion relates to a change proposed by the ESF Board to then separate out those items traditionally included in the ESF AGM into items

which are required by the Companies Act to constitute an AGM (and thus require proxy voting to be applied) and those other items which can instead be covered within a less formalised Members' meeting (and not subject to the provisions of the Companies Act).

The Board believes this separation will enable us to conform to the requirements of the Companies Act, whilst presenting an opportunity to improve Member engagement in a broader programme around the date and venue of the AGM. This might include a Members' meeting to address policy matters, e.g. around Championships (previously included in the AGM agenda, but not strictly AGM business), and a mini-conference which can address development aspects (e.g. coaching, refereeing, squash development, marketing, etc).

*An example of the likely content for the AGM and meetings alongside the AGM are suggested in **appendix H**.*

The President explained this motion proposes a change to the Articles so a majority of 75% is required. This matter has arisen from a challenge by a MNA 2 years ago, on the basis that we should implement proxy votes according to the Companies Act in England and Wales. Proxy voting has been researched, legal advice has been sought and it cannot be avoided for ESF without moving the company out of the UK. This motion will result in changes being introduced from the AGM in 2016.

The President commented that ESF would like to see more members at the AGM and proxy voting could mean fewer people attend if we don't provide a sufficiently strong incentive for MNAs to attend. This is why the Board proposes a Members' Forum and mini-conference alongside a condensed AGM which covers ESF's legal requirements. Proxy voting will be based on the submission of a form in advance. The members' forum and mini-conference will encourage MNAs to suggest items and contribute to delivery.

Members were happy to vote for items A and B together.

Motion accepted – 16 votes for, 1 abstention.

10.2 Motion – Italy

European Senior Circuit

Proposal

Introduction of a European Senior Circuit (age range 19-35) to the existing and successful Junior and Masters Circuits.

Background and Explanation

It is useful to offer to all the young players that are out of age limits from the European circuit more opportunities to play at international level

Now it is possible exclusively in the PSA circuit, but are very selective and not directly linked to the technical qualities of the players. For the players who are in transition age (19-23 years, it is difficult to enter and compete in PSA tournaments, even in the lower level events (5 Challenger – Challenger 10, limiting their ability to compete with other international level opponents and, consequently, also limiting their competitive growth.

For these reasons, we believe that it is appropriate to introduce a European Senior Circuit, organizing a series of tournaments, as successfully happens, in the ESF European circuits, for both juniors and masters. Moreover, as possible for ESF U19s junior tournaments, these events can be registered to the PSA, allowing players to get points valid for the PSA world rankings; similarly, the chance to play even in the consolation draws, will give the opportunity to all players to have more chances to play

with other international level opponents. The running of these tournaments could be scheduled on two days (Saturday and Sunday – with a maximum of 32-player draw.

Davide Babini stated that Italy was happy to withdraw this motion on the basis of the imminent start-up of the European Under 23 Circuit, which would start to fill the gap identified by the Italian motion.

Motion withdrawn.

The President invited VP Reidun Ribesen to address the Members on the Under 23 Circuit. She advised of 4 initial tournaments planned for 2015: Switzerland, Belgium, Sweden and Czech Republic. Pascal Bruhin from Switzerland asked all MNAs to encourage entries from their players. The President suggested the U23 hosts could connect with University Federations in their own countries and expressed her thanks to Switzerland for hosting the first one.

11 MOTIONS CONCERNING THE RULES GOVERNING EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

11.1 Motion – Management Board

New Structure for ESF Event Levies

The Board proposes a simplification to the ESF levy structure, from 2016

The current ESF levy structure comprises various combinations of entry fees, basic- and standard packages, and deposits. The Board believes this structure has 3 weaknesses:

- i. It is confusing to MNAs entering teams*
- ii. It makes it difficult for a host to predict how many hotel rooms to book and budget for*
- iii. It provides no fee revenue for the host towards the basic costs of organising the championship itself*

Hosts tend to rely on teams opting for the full package in order to cover their overall costs. It therefore makes it very difficult for a potential host to predict a budget in advance of bidding for an event, particularly when teams opt out of hotel, food and transport at last-minute. It places undue financial risk with the host (particularly ETC 1 & 2), unless they are able to secure sponsorship in advance of bidding for an event.

*With the proposed new structure (**appendix I**) it is easier for hosts to calculate their budget in advance. It should also make bidding for events more competitive, and encourage potential hosts to add value into their tenders to distinguish their bid from those of other MNAs, and to raise the quality of Championships.*

For MNAs the new structure simplifies the calculation to enter an ESF event. Each player/team will pay an entry fee and an event package per person. So each player/reserve/coach/physio pays the same amount which includes the organisation of the event, provision of referees, access to watch matches and final dinner/party.

The hotel, food and transport packages are offered as optional to teams/players, but incentivises the host to offer an attractive hotel option as part of the strength of their tender. The designated hotel(s) will remain an important part of the TD's inspection visit.

With approval of this motion the AGM agrees that ESF office may adjust the event guidelines/regulations accordingly.

VP Marcel Borst explained the motion to the AGM delegates, based on a single entry fee per event, which will make it easier for hosts to calculate their budget and costs per event and hopefully encourage more hosts. Hotel packages, transport between airport and hotel and other items to enhance the championships can be offered as optional extras to make the bid more attractive. It is hoped this will result in more competition between potential hosts, and therefore a general improvement in the quality of bids and championships.

It was also explained that alongside the change in the fees structure, the tender document is to be redesigned, which will help nations considering hosting an event, with help the bidding process and the delivery of the event.

Switzerland shared its concerns regarding the variable exchange rates, and the impact on event budgets, and whether this could be fixed in some way to eliminate the financial risks of hosting. In response, the President explained it would become far too complex for ESF to peg exchange rates as there would always be controversy over relative winners and losers. So we have to work to the market exchange rates.

The motion was accepted unanimously

12 FUTURE EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

12.1 Schedule of future Championship allocation to date

Year	Junior U15/17 Team Champs	Junior U19 Individual & Team Champs	Team Champs Div 1&2	Team Champs Div 3	Club Champs	Individual Closed Champs	Masters Individual Champs
2015	Portugal	Czech Republic	Denmark	Slovenia	Poland	Slovakia	Sweden
2016	<i>Tenders received from Belgium, Czech Republic</i>	Switzerland	Poland	<i>Tenders received from Italy, Portugal, Romania</i>	England	<i>Tender received from Czech Republic</i>	No event
2017					Germany		
2018							No event

VP Marcel Borst advised we have enough tenders for 2016 events and that where there are multiple tenders inspection visits will be done as soon as possible. He advised of Jersey's and Greece's interest in ETC3 2017 and that ESF is talking with potential hosts for EICC 2017. He asked MNAs to consider tendering for EMIC, U15/17, U19 and ETC1-2 2017 and for all 2018 championships. Austria expressed an interest in hosting EICC 2017.

13 ELECTION OF THE ESF MANAGEMENT BOARD

Zena Wooldridge was the only candidate for President, so was elected for a second term of 2 years by acclamation.

Jackie Robinson was the only female candidate, so was elected by acclamation.

The President then explained there were 3 candidates for the remaining Vice President position, and explained the voting procedure.

Serge Maggi (Belgium) advised in the way the WSF AGM operated, to ask the MNA's delegates to introduce their nominated candidates in their absence.

Jacques Fontaine, as the only candidate present, addressed the MNAs, and representatives from Italy and England introduced their candidates in their absence. A question was raised about Vice President's portfolios, and how they were allocated relative to nominees' capabilities and interests. The President advised that within the democratic election process we have not so far gone out to elect people with certain capabilities to fit vacant portfolios in the board, but instead the board juggles portfolios as best we can between elected candidates.

A question was raised about the countries represented on the Board, to which the President responded that the President and 4 VPs cannot have more than two representatives from one nation.

Jacques Fontaine was elected as Vice President after one single round of election.

14 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

WSF Board Meeting

The President advised that Europe will be attending the WSF Board Meeting next week and that one of the agenda items is Olympic inclusion. She explained there work is still taking place behind the scenes, and the WSF President, Mr Ramachandran's attendance today to give an Olympic update was prevented due to sad family circumstances.

WSF Strategic Plan

The President will ask WSF for a copy of this at the above mentioned Board meeting.

Deadlines

The President requested all MNAs work to the deadlines communicated by the ESF Office as late or lack of replies create more work for the Office and volunteers.

Thanks

The President expressed thanks to retiring officers: Reidun Ribesen who was retiring after 35 years' service to Norwegian Squash and after 2 years on the ESF Board; and Thomas Troedsson, who is standing down from the Director of the Juniors Committee. Thanks was also given to Tom Kjaerbye Larsen and Dansk Squash Forbund for hosting the delegates and ETC1-2 so well this year.

The President also expressed her thanks to the ESF Board to Peter Derrick as Company Secretary and Treasurer and to the Office staff for their commitment throughout the year.

ESF/WSF Coaching Update

Michael Khan presented an overview of developments within ESF and WSF coaching, and the significant progress over the last year in establishing a common system for level 1 awards across WSF Regions and Nations. The WSF Working Group is now working towards the same at level 2.

The President applauded the work undertaken by this small group of European-based coaching experts, and Michael Khan for his leadership in this area.

15 NEXT MEETING

The next Annual General Meeting will be held in conjunction with the 2016 European Team Championships Divisions 1&2 in Warsaw, Poland. This is scheduled to be held on Saturday 30th April but there is a slight possibility that ETC dates may move a week later, with AGM on 7 May. The ESF office will advise of any changes as soon as possible.

16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Switzerland expressed concerns over what it regarded as poor and unprofessional communications around the change in venue for this year's World Junior Championships. The President said she could raise this at next week's WSF Board meeting, but suggested Pascal discuss it directly with the WSF Director of Championships, Thomas Troedsson whilst he is in Herning because he and Hugo Hannes (WSF VP) were having to handle some very sensitive international relations issues around the change of venue at such short notice.

Germany asked about one of their players who was banned and had asked another nation to adopt him in order to continue playing in European masters' events. The President advised on action it has taken to support Germany's request, and that ultimately a players' eligibility will be controlled by their SPIN, and they must convince WSF of a legitimate change in eligibility to change their SPIN national designation. This is one of the advantages of adopting SPIN.

Jacques Fontaine advised the next WSF AGM is 4-6 November in Nice.

The President thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 10:55 am.