

AUGUST 2004 NEWSLETTER



WELCOME TO DAVID OPENSHAW, INCOMING PRESIDENT, AND TO NEW MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

David Openshaw, England, was elected to the position of President of the WCF effective from 15 December 2003.

David has been a member of the Croquet Association Council from 1981-1985, and from 1998 onwards. In both periods he was on the International Committee and was recently Chairman of that committee. He has regularly played croquet overseas in New Zealand, Australia and in USA. He has also played in Canada, Italy, Ireland and Scotland. With the insight provided into the different needs of croquet around the world he looks forward to using this experience to help the WCF develop croquet world wide.

The election of David Openshaw as President created a vacancy on the Management Committee from 15 December 2003 and that vacancy has been filled in accordance with Rule 5 K of the Rules of the WCF.

Rhys Thomas from the United States Croquet Association has been appointed to the vacant position.

Tony Hall, retiring President of the WCF will continue as a member of the Management Committee as Immediate Past President.

Nominations were received from Peter Payne, Switzerland, Amir Ramsis Naguib, Egypt and Charles Jones, New Zealand for the three vacant positions on the Management Committee. Accordingly an election was not required in terms of the Rules of the WCF and

the three nominees assumed office on 15 December 2003.

Retiring members of the Management Committee who did not seek re-election were Colin Irwin, England and Ahmed Hamrrouch, Egypt. These Management Committee members contributed significantly to the development of the WCF and their dedication has been a significant factor in the continued growth of the WCF as the international body representing world croquet.

Peter Payne, Switzerland, is an existing member of the Management Committee and will continue in that role.

New members elected to the Management Committee bring to the committee a wealth of experience at the national level. Their fresh views and contributions are keenly anticipated.

Charles Jones has recently completed his term of President of the New Zealand Croquet Council and has been actively involved in New Zealand croquet since 1977 as both a national coach and manager of New Zealand national teams. He has a particular interest in the promotion and development of all variations of the game of croquet.

Amir Ramsis Naguib has been President of the Egyptian Croquet Federation since 2001 and a major sponsor of croquet in Egypt for many years. His particular interests are the development of croquet in Arab and African countries and the development of regional associations in those areas.

The Management Committee met in Florida during the course of the MacRobertson Shield event. The meeting was attended by some of the newly appointed members of the Committee.

MESSAGE FROM THE INCOMING PRESIDENT DAVID OPENSHAW

Over the past few years the World Croquet Federation has achieved a lot.

Golf croquet has been given a new lease of life. Many countries have seen an increase the number of players playing this form of croquet. A common worldwide set of rules has been established and is currently being revised. Six Golf Croquet World Championships have been held including the most recent one in England in June 2004.

The Association Croquet World Championships have been developed with much larger fields (between 64 and 80), and a policy has been established that they be open to all top players and to successful competitors in the qualifying event.

The MacRobertson Shield has been recognised as the premier World Team Championship.

The number of member countries has now grown to 22. Sweden and Russia have recently joined.

As the new President of the WCF my first thought is to thank Tony Hall the retiring president for all that he has achieved. He has been a particularly active President. He has visited many member countries on many occasions. I am pleased to say that he has agreed to continue these visits on behalf of the WCF.

Now what would I like to see the WCF achieve in the future?

Firstly we must ensure we meet the needs of our member countries. I will be asking all of them how we can do this. The answers will play an important part in developing our plans.

Of course I already have some of my own thoughts on how the WCF should develop.

We should help promote international play as a way for players to increase their enthusiasm for croquet and as a way to further personal friendships.

All countries face the issue of recruiting and retaining players. The WCF can help to promote croquet in its member countries. We can help by communicating those ways that have had practical success. Examples of these are Kiwi Croquet for 8-14 year olds, Aussie Rules Croquet as an introduction to Association Croquet and the partnership forged between lawn bowling and croquet in Canada.

I would like to see a stronger commitment to establish a forward programme for World Championships beyond the current 3 to 4 year horizon. Recent World Championships have shown how popular they are wherever they are held.

So far Australia, England, Egypt, Italy, New Zealand and the United States have held events. I would like to see other countries being added to this list. The WCF now has a more flexible approach to awarding events and encouraging countries to bid to hold events. I want to continue this approach.

I would like to see if there is demand for women's World Championships and for a best eight (or ten) event for the world's best players. I would like to see the establishment of a ranking system for countries.

The WCF as with most croquet organisations has limited funds. This limits what it can achieve. I would like to firstly increase the number of volunteers who are working to help the WCF achieve its goals. Secondly I would like to see us increase our income through donations and commercial sponsorship geared to specific spending/development plans.

Our website needs to be developed. I'd like to see it as a multi lingual site so that non-English speakers might be more likely to be attracted to croquet. We will publish a calendar of the main croquet events around the world. We should also provide information for anyone travelling abroad to help them meet fellow croquet players around the world.

Finally I want to ensure that we listen to our member countries and individual players around the world. I will welcome any feedback, comment or criticism about our goals and effectiveness.

I look forward to this opportunity to help the development of croquet worldwide.

POSITIVE REFLECTIONS FROM A SUITCASE-

A MESSAGE FROM TONY HALL, OUTGOING WCF PRESIDENT

Seven years ago I was asked to become a member of the Management Committee of the WCF. A year later, when I was asked to stand for President, I listed the things that I thought the WCF should do. Many of those aims have been accomplished, but there are some important things still to be done.

The most important thing was to establish the WCF as the clear governing body for world croquet with responsibility and accountability to its members. I believe that has been accomplished.

Other important things were to find out more about our member countries, to standardise equipment, refereeing and handicapping, to simplify the rules and regulations and to endorse world rankings. There was also a need to conduct more world championships and establish a long-term programme. Finances needed to be consolidated, communication with members and WCF Friends facilitated, and a history of the WCF was required before memories faded.

To find out more about our members I visited all member countries (it had not happened previously) as an extension of my self-funded trips to play croquet. I also attempted to recruit new countries. The hospitality I received was exceptional and I thank all concerned.

Most countries were progressing well, but not all, and my advice was not always welcome, however in the long term the results have been productive. During my term we lost one member (The Netherlands) but gained four new members (Austria, Germany, Russia and Sweden). France was faltering but is back as an active member through the Bayeux Croquet Club.

I found the WCF to be working well but almost entirely due to the energy and dedication of the Secretary-General, Chris Hudson. He had been in the job since the WCF was formed twelve years before. His reputation had suffered as he had made all the hard decisions himself and he had needed to cross paths with some who resisted change. Very few knew how much effort he had devoted to the difficult task of establishing an international body. May I take this opportunity to thank him again.

It was clear that the WCF needed to become a larger organization with many people doing the work that is required. I consulted the Management Committee more often and hoped the work could be spread between them but soon realised that the members did not necessarily have the skills required. We identified the need for some WCF Officers: World Rankings Officers, Archivist/Historian, Webmaster, Equipment Officer, Events Managers for each continent, Newsletter Editor, Handicapping Officer and Chief Referee. Most of these positions are now filled and work is in progress. I regret that I was unable to find a Newsletter Editor for some time and the newsletter in which this message will be published is the first for some time.

The only items remaining on my original list is for the WCF to become responsible for supervising the World Cup for the MacRobertson Shield and for the committee which writes the Laws of Association Croquet.

The single most difficult problem for the WCF remains the need for more finance. Our budget is now well established with half our finance coming from annual subscriptions and half from the conduct of world championships, but any initiatives to improve this position will be welcome.

It has been a privilege to serve the croquet community through the WCF and I am most grateful for the opportunity. What has been accomplished could only be done with the assistance of the office-bearers, of our member countries, the members of the WCF Management Committee and the officers of the WCF, all of whom I thank most heartily.

May I congratulate David Openshaw and the new Management Committee on their election and wish them well in their future endeavours.

As I continue to travel, both to play the game and to assist the new President, I hope to continue to meet many of the good friends I have made in so many countries. If we are lucky the courts will be level and green, our strokes smooth and straight and the hoops yawning wide.

WFC MEMBERSHIP RECIPROCITY

A note from Gary Fox, Secretary-General...

The Rules of the WCF were amended in 2001 to provide for reciprocal rights to be made available to players from one member association visiting another member association of the WCF. Players should now be able to play and compete in another member's events and at the clubs of another member.

Players should obtain from their National Association a letter or written form of introduction from their home Association to present to the visited Association. The introduction should be sent or presented initially to the Head Office of the visited association and a copy carried to present to each club that is visited. Simplicity of operation is important in these arrangements.

Australia has cancelled the overseas player surcharge that applied to entry fees in their national Championships for overseas players as a tangible response to these changes.

UPDATE ON WFC RULE CHANGES FOLLOW ...

The members of the WCF agreed in 2001 to a number of rule changes to improve the operations of the WCF. These include:

Membership Criteria

Rules 2 and 15 have been revised to incorporate all the requirements for WCF membership that have developed over the years. The area of jurisdiction of a member Association has been revised to be simply "a nation".

Non Payment of Subscriptions

Rule 17 has been revised to avoid the need for a formal vote to be taken to exclude a member Association which fails to pay annual subscriptions.

Golf Croquet Rules Committee

Rule 20 has been revised to change the responsibility for the Rules of Golf Croquet to the WCF Golf Croquet Rules Committee and a new Rule 6B drafted to provide for election of that Committee. This change of responsibility recognises the situation that has existed since publication of the first WCF Rules of Golf Croquet in 1998. The Committee comprises an appointee from Australia, England, Egypt, New Zealand and the United States and a member elected from the remaining full members of the WCF. A further change is to include the USCA in the associations to be consulted on the Laws of Association Croquet.

International Laws Committee

Proposals to establish the International Laws Committee under the jurisdiction of the WCF were defeated 8 votes to 8 votes. Australia, England and Egypt voted against the proposal.

Officers of the WCF

A new rule has been drafted to provide for the following officers to assist in administration of the WCF: Rankings Officer, Equipment Officer, Webmaster, Newsletter Editor, Archivist/Historian, Events Manager (America), Events Manager (Europe), Events Manager (Australia/New Zealand), Handicapping Coordinator.

Appointment of Treasurer

The Treasurer is now appointed by Council, rather than by and from the Management Committee. However unless the Treasurer is an already elected member of that Committee, s/he will have no vote on the Management Committee.

Secretary-General

The Secretary-General of the WCF no longer needs to be a member of the Management Committee. However if not already an elected member of that Committee the Secretary General has no vote on the Management Committee

FUTURE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

How we now allocate places between members in world championships

The distribution of places in a World Championship can be a vexed issue. Places have been allocated to all members of the WCF, with the greater number allocated to members with the largest number of players and/or the higher percentage of players in the top 50/100 of the world ranking list. Wild card entries are available to rectify any anomalies. A qualifying event is also held to provide an alternative avenue for players to enter the event and the host nation receives additional places.

Event size determines the complexities of any method of place distribution. The smaller the number of total places in an event means the greater the likelihood that very good players from a strong country will not receive a place. Similarly some countries do not predominantly play Association croquet and are not adequately represented in the world rankings. Their allocated places may not represent the number of places that should be made available.

For any distribution system to be considered a success it should be capable of including most of the top 50 players in the world. The reality is that achieving a participation rate of 50% of the top 50 players would be considered a success as the costs associated with participation, and work and family

commitments prevent some players from attending.

The Wellington Championships and the WCF Council Meeting at Wellington recognised that:

- the minimum number of places in the event should be 64. The number of places available to the 4 largest countries would generally be maintained at a minimum of 6, provided the number of places in the championships was 64 and greater.
- the Qualifying Event was a great success, especially held immediately prior to the Championships. It provided a source of players to fill vacancies resulting from late withdrawals. The format used for the event, one block of 19 players, was well liked by players. In future late withdrawals from any Plate event will be filled where possible from the Preliminary event.

The WCF will publish the method of place allocation agreed by the Management Committee prior to each event

Dress Standards

Dress standards for players have been revised. The new standards will be published on the Web site and copies are available from the Secretary General. Copies will be included in player information packs provided to players before each Championship.

Players now have the following dress options:

- wear a national sporting uniform recognised and acceptable to the WCF or
- wear predominantly white clothing. (Predominantly white clothing is defined as white shorts/slacks/skirts/socks and shoes with more than 75% of their surface area white).
- Coloured shirts may be worn.
- Wet weather clothing is excluded from these provisions.

Separate conditions apply to sponsor logos and vary dependant on major sponsor obligations. Brand logos are generally excluded from any restrictive provisions.

AND ... ELABORATING FURTHER ON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS

The Management Committee of the WCF has been concerned that within the existing WCF framework for the hosting of a world championship event, WFC requirements relating to the distribution of sponsorship funds may deter members from applying to conduct such events.

In considering the issues, the Committee considered that it was necessary that amounts payable to the WCF should be clear and transparent. The Committee was also clear that any sponsorship funds raised by the WCF member conducting an event should be retained by that member to cover the costs of conducting the event and for further development of croquet in the domain of that member. The WCF will no longer seek a share in naming rights or other sponsorship received.

Payments to the WCF will consist of the current licence fee for a major World Championship of GBP1000. Additionally entry fees for the event accrue in full to the WCF. Entry fees for any qualifying event accrue to the host association.

The current booklets produced by the WCF for major events - The Bidding and Hosting of WCF World Championship Events - have been withdrawn and will be redrafted to reflect these changes.

WORLD TEAMS EVENT

The Management Committee of the WCF has agreed to explore with members the concept of a world teams event for those members who are not part of the MacRobertson Shield Series. The MacRobertson Shield is the premium croquet teams event conducted every 3/4 years between Australia, Great Britain and Ireland, New Zealand and the United States of America. The competition has been conducted since 1925. The United States Croquet Association hosted the most recent event in November at the National Croquet Centre, Florida.

The MacRobertson Shield countries support the development of the proposal. Entry to the MacRobertson Shield is subject to application and negotiation at a later stage.

The WCF has written to members with a detailed proposal. The proposal will be discussed with interested members and their views will be taken into account. Some initial thoughts are:

- 4/6 member teams
- playing doubles and singles
- possible formats include the format for the Australian Interstate Cup (single life doubles and reverse singles) a modified MacRobertson Shield format or a full MacRobertson format.

The WCF is prepared to provide financial support to conduct the event.

GOLF CROQUET...or should it be called something else?

At the Golf Croquet World Championships held in Florida in 2001 a commitment was made to players that the WCF would discuss the issue of the name of the game.

The naming of Golf Croquet has been discussed in a variety of forums with no real consensus on whether the name should be changed. To focus discussion a draft motion for presentation to the Wellington 2001 Council meeting was circulated amongst Management Committee members and officers of the WCF. As anticipated, the motion provided a focus point for discussion and debate and the standard options of amending the motion, and voting for or against it were available to Council members. An open and robust process such as this allows consensus to be reached and/or sets a clear direction on a particular issue.

On this issue, the Council of the WCF unanimously agreed that there should be no change to the name.

If the motion to change the name had been agreed, the proposal would have been referred back to members for a debate within each member's domain for a minimum period of 6 months and then a formal vote.

PLAYER SURVEY – WELLINGTON 2002 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Players in the Wellington 2002 World Championships were requested to provide their views on issues they felt important about the Championships. A limited number of responses have been received and the results were:

The arrangements made by the NZCC for the conduct of the Championships were excellent. The transport arrangements, official functions and accommodation at Weir House were all great (The Brentwood was too far from play) and the players appreciated the efforts made by everyone to assist them.

The major issue coming from the players was the seeding of the final 32. Players had quite different views on how it should be done. Some preferred to seed on:

- **block results-** number 1 in a block plays number 4 in another block etc., with a random draw to determine which number 1 plays which number 4 or a pre determined draw.
- **world rankings** calculated after the block play and with the result of 1 versus 4, 2 versus 3 etc.
- **a more random basis for each eight** - 1 to 5 and 3 places draw at random

A Committee has been formed to consider and recommend to the Management Committee a preferred way of completing this seeding process. The Committee is headed by Louis Nel (Canada) with the following members: Stephen Meatheringham (Australia) Kevin Fellow (New Zealand) Chris Clarke (England)

Other issues :

Automatic entries

The number of automatic qualifiers should be increased to include the 3 previous winners of the event and up to the 8 quarter-finalists of the previous event and the top 12 players in the world. The mix would see places offered to around the top 16 players in the world. Places at Wellington were offered to the 4 semi-finalists from the previous event.

Qualifying event

A brilliant event, fun to play in. It could have been announced earlier to allow more people to travel and play. Unfilled places in the plate to come from this event.

Player information

As much as possible on all parts of the event should be made available as early as possible. This includes details of place allocation and seeding.

More Play

Some players would like more play, especially when knocked out of the Plate in its early stages. Some would like an event say for the Golden Oldies – for those players say over 55.

More Fun

Some players would like more informal get togethers and all enjoyed the Official functions.

More comprehensive information for players pre-event

More information will be provided in the player pack on the WCF website about each Championship. The information provided to host associations is being redrafted to include the preliminary event and for it to be held along similar lines to Wellington, with more publicity.

The information on place allocation will be published to provide for comment from players and other members of the WCF after preliminary agreement has been reached with the host member.

The comments about more play, transport and accommodation will be made available to the next host association, and will be considered in conjunction with the overall arrangements for the next championships.

Well done Wellington!

SEEDING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Committee established under the Chairmanship of Louis Nel has submitted its report on the seeding of World Association Championships.

The recommendations have been accepted by the WCF Management Committee and will be used in the next World Championships.

The report will be made available on the WCF web site and copies can be obtained from the Secretary –General.

WORLD ANTI-DOPING AUTHORITY (WADA)

WADA was established in 1999 from an International Olympic Committee (IOC) initiative. Through WADA, governments and sporting organisations are united in a collective effort to achieve drug free sports.

The World Anti-Doping Code, agreed by WADA with the support of over 80 countries so far, will be progressively implemented between 2004 and 2006. The Code will replace existing IOC standards. Governments of most WCF members have accepted the code.

WCF members, Australia, England and New Zealand already have anti-doping codes in place. These are modelled on existing IOC guidelines. Additionally, for some WCF members, governmental funding is dependant upon the adoption and implementation of an anti-doping code. The model code adopted by some members contains provision for the International Federation - the WCF – to have its own code.

The WCF has no anti-doping code at the moment. Any events conducted on behalf of the WCF would need to meet the anti-doping requirements of the member conducting the event. For most WCF members the WADA Anti-doping Code would be used.

An area of particular concern to all croquet players could be the sections of the code covering the therapeutic use of drugs in sport. Sporting

Associations may ban entirely the use of any drugs in sport or they may permit the use of banned drugs for therapeutic use. Therapeutic use is defined as a player experiencing significant impairment to health if the banned drugs were withheld in the course of treating a chronic or acute medical condition. Additionally the use of the drugs would produce no additional enhancement of performance other than might be anticipated by the return to normal health of the athlete.

Comments on our Anti Doping Code are welcomed by the Secretary General.

GOLF CROQUET RULES

A draft revision of the WCF Golf Croquet Rules is published on the WCF website at www.wcfcroquet.org. It has been prepared by the WCF Golf Croquet Rules Committee.

The committee has operated on a majority rules basis. Inevitably the revision is a compromise between the opinions of the six members of the committee: Gordon Smith (New Zealand), Bill Arliss (England), Amir Ramsis (Egypt), David Bent (USA), Leo McBride (Canada, but also representing the other Members of the WCF) and Tony Hall (Australia).

Comment on the proposed revision is sought from all interested parties. Direct comments to: tony.hall@netspeed.com.au.

All comments will be referred to all members of the Committee and will be answered either publicly or privately.

Most of the revision has been to make the wording easier to understand. The rule on Outline of the Game has been moved to the beginning. There have been some additions to make some rules explicit rather than implied (For example Rule 6(a) relating to an "air swing").

A few changes have made to the way the game is played (The major changes are in Rule 5 The Start; Rule 7(a) Hoop Point; Rule 8(d) Interference, Rule 11(b) which now allows the adversary of the owner of a ball over a halfway line to choose where a ball is moved to; Rule 13(c) which now allows the opponent to have the balls remain as they lie after a striking fault; Rule 14 Behaviour; and Rule 15 Referee Duties.). The diagrams, which are not on the website, are the same as in the current rules.

When comments result in agreed amendments I will try to put them on the website as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary commenting. The draft rules are to be finalised as soon as possible and were used for the MGM Assurance 6th WCF World Golf Croquet Championships in England in June. We aim to have a final version of the rules by the end of this year.

Tony Hall, Chairman
WCF Golf Croquet Rules Committee.

GOLF CROQUET WCF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2004.

The 2004 MGM Assurance 6th WCF World Golf Croquet Championships have just been completed in England. Congratulations to Ahmed Nasr (Egypt) on his victory. He beat Dennis Bulloch (New Zealand) 7-4 7-3 7-1 in the final. Mark McInerney (Ireland) and Khalid Younis (Egypt) were semi finalists. Beaten Quarter Finalists were Reg Bamford (South Africa), Salah Hassan (Egypt), Hazem Mahmoud (Egypt) and Derek Old (England). Players from 19 countries participated. This included representatives for the first time from Austria and Sweden. Full details of the event can be found on www.worldgolfcroquet2004.com

FUTURE EVENTS

The next Association Croquet World Championships will be held in England from 6 August to 14 August 2005. The Cheltenham club will be the main host venue with matches also being played at Bristol, Edgbaston and Nailsea.

The next Golf Croquet World Championships are expected to be held in New Zealand in 2006.

The first ever Women's World Golf Croquet Championship will be held in Egypt in November 2005

The next MacRobertson Shield will be held in Australia in Nov 2006.