

WCF Management Committee Report 2016

This report covers the year ended 31 December 2016

OVERVIEW

Membership

Membership of the WCF is currently 29, consisting of ten Full, ten Associate and nine Observer Members.

What the WCF does

The work of the WCF falls into four main categories, namely:

- (1) **World Championships** – from the perspective of the great majority of competitive croquet players around the world, the organisation of world championships is by a large margin the WCF's most important function.
- (2) **Development** – the expansion of organised croquet throughout the world remains a key WCF objective.
- (3) **Communication with Members** – keeping Members up to date with WCF and WCF MC activities and seeking Council's approval of MC recommendations through the e-mail decision process.
- (4) **Administration and finance** – ensuring that the day-to-day running, periodic tasks and financing of the WCF are managed efficiently. Specific subjects requiring management include the 10 year Championship Schedule, the WCF web-site, the Hall of Fame, WCF membership applications, the Rules of Golf Croquet and the WCF Statutes and Regulations.

1. WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

1.1 Association Croquet World Championship

The first WCF event of 2016 was the ACWC held from 16 to 24 April at the National Croquet Center, West Palm Beach in Florida. The reigning champion, Robert Fletcher (AUS), had become the youngest-ever winner in 2013 at the Surbiton, London but unfortunately was unable to defend his title because of business commitments. In the absence of five-time winner Robert Fulford (ENG), four-time winner and 2013 semi-finalist Reg Bamford (ZAF) and the 2013 runner-up, Paddy Chapman (NZL), were the clear ante-post favourites. They both duly reached the semi-finals but there lost to Stephen Mulliner (ENG) and David Maloof (USA) who were both aged 62, some 29 years older than the previous oldest first-time winner (Reg Bamford in 2001) and 17 years older than the combined ages of the 2013 finalists!

Mulliner had already played three five-game matches en route to the final, including a recovery from 0-2 against Bamford, and lost the first two games of the final to Maloof. However, he produced yet another recovery from the brink of defeat and took the title after a match lasting over 10 hours of actual play and one that ended up on a different court and under floodlights.

1.2 Golf Croquet World Team Championship

The second GCWTC was played in three tiers at three different English venues in May. Tier 1 was held from 16 to 21 May at Surbiton, London; Tier 2 from 16 to 20 May at the Bath and Camerton & Peasdown clubs in Somerset and Tier 3 at the Guildford & Godalming club from 18 to 20 May.

Tier 3 featured teams from Norway, Portugal and Russia with a CA Select team to ensure that all teams were fully occupied. A team from Georgia entered but were unable to gain the necessary visas. Norway were comfortably the strongest team and were worthy winners.

The Tier 2 trophy was competed for by teams from Australia, Belgium, Czech-Moravian Republic, Germany, Latvia, Scotland, Spain and Switzerland. Australia sent a strong team with the goal of obtaining promotion back to Tier 1 and duly reached the final after a convincing win against Latvia in the semi-finals to face Spain who had a similarly clear win against Germany. Although the Spanish team had impressed, unsurprisingly given the healthy state of GC at home, Australia took the title by an 8-4 margin with one match unfinished.

The teams competing in Tier 1 for the Openshaw Shield were Egypt (defending champions from 2012 in Johannesburg), England (3rd in 2012), Ireland, New Zealand (runners-up in 2012), South Africa, Sweden, United States and Wales. The two strongest teams were clearly the previous finalists and New Zealand produced some superb performances in both singles and doubles to emerge very worthy winners by 7-5 with one match unfinished.

1.3 Forthcoming Events

Three events are scheduled for 2017:

- the Under 21 Golf Croquet World Championship will be held at the Victorian Croquet Centre, Cairnlea, Victoria from 18 to 22 February.
- the Golf Croquet World Championship will be held at the Victorian Croquet Centre, Cairnlea, Victoria from 25 February to 5 March.
- the Association Croquet World Team Championship –the MacRobertson Shield (Tier 1) will be held at Mission Hills Country Club, Palm Springs, California from 18 April to 5 May while Tiers 2.1, 2.2 and 3 will be held at Sussex County Croquet Club, near Brighton, England from 17 to 22 July.

Event Hosts and the venues

The MC and its Event Sub-Committees are responsible for arranging and scheduling these events and handling entries and these involve considerable amounts of time and effort. However, it is as ever the Event Hosts who do the hardest work of making World Championships happen by providing and maintaining lawns, appointing officials, seeking sponsorship, arranging catering and taking care of all the other practical arrangements that are an essential part of holding a large tournament. On behalf of all the participants and other Members, the MC would like to express its gratitude to the 2016 Event Hosts, namely the United States Croquet Association (for the ACWC) and the Croquet Association (for the GCWTC) and to the clubs which provided the venues, namely the National Croquet Center (ACWC), the PGA National (for the ACWC qualifier and Plate) and the Bath, Camerton & Peasdown, Guildford & Godalming and Surbiton clubs (GCWTC).

2. DEVELOPMENT

The MC approach to development recognises that the WCF is not resourced to be a missionary organisation. It is instead founded on the principle of supporting national organisations because only they can provide the continuous support necessary for the growth of croquet at club level within their own domains. This support can take two main forms, namely providing coaching to Members and making capital grants to help develop croquet playing facilities.

Coaching can be in relation to improving playing and refereeing standards and in developing coaching skills so that Members can become self-sufficient. Coaching assistance can take place either by arranging for a coach to visit a Member's country or by offering courses for representatives of several of the smaller Members in one of the larger and more established Members, typically England to date. One of the key goals is to develop more qualified coaches in those Members able to benefit from this.

In May 2016, the MC arranged a coaching course for players and coaches from smaller Members at the Croquet Academy at Southwick, England. The WCF pays for the fees and provides a small travel grant for those travelling from outside the UK.

The MC was pleased to authorised a capital grant of £1,500 to the Scottish Croquet Association to assist it with raising funds from the National Lottery and other sources to fund the creation of a four-lawn club on disused bowling greens at Balgreen in Edinburgh. The MC would like to encourage any Member that does not yet have a top-class venue with at least four full-size lawns to consider putting together a project which the WCF can part-fund. The WCF will always limit itself to match-funding which means that the Member must expect to raise at least 50% of the project funds itself.

Any other ideas from Members for boosting Development are very welcome and will always be actively considered by the MC.

3. COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS

Newsletters

Newsletters are published on the WCF website every one or two months depending on activity and are intended to ensure that all those interested in what the WCF and the MC are doing are adequately informed and kept up-to-date.

Website

The WCF website is now hosted by SiteGround who have proved both reliable and helpful. Using Joomla 3 as the content management system has greatly eased website administration and development.

Council decision-making

The Council took six decisions in 2016. These were:

- 51: Approval of Italy's change of status from Associate to Observer Member.
- 52: Removal of France from membership.
- 53: Approval of amendments to the Event and Sports Regulations.

- 56: Election of Martin French as Treasurer.
- 57: Adoption of new WCF Statutes.
- 58: Election of Christian Carter as Independent Examiner.

Three other decisions were approved with a Closing Date of 1 January 2017, namely:

- 59: Approval of 2017 Budget.
- 60: Approval of 2017 Business Plan.
- 61: Approval of amendments to the WCF Finance Regulations.

The Council also approved a minor change to the Refereeing Regulations in July 2016 using the “dot release” method of approval.

The Council also undertook three consultations in 2016, namely:

- 50: Consultation on the constitution of the GC Rules Committee
- 54: Consultation on a new draft of the WCF Statutes
- 55: Consultation on the status of the Ramsis Cup

The responses to Topics 50 and 54 informed the drafting of the new WCF Statutes. The responses to Topic 55 showed a fairly equal split between adopting/not adopting the Ramsis Cup as a WCF Team Event. It will be trialled as a match between the Event Host and a Rest of World Team before the 2017 GCWC and then further discussed with Members.

Elections

Apart from the annual election of the Independent Examiner, the only election required in 2016 was that of Martin French as Treasurer in succession to Gabrielle Higgins who resigned on 30 June 2016 due to pressure of her work commitments. Martin was duly elected under Topic 56 and will serve until 31 December 2020.

4. ADMINISTRATION

WCF Statutes

A full review of the current Statutes (Version 11.6) was completed which culminated in an extensive re-organisation of the text and a general improvement of the drafting. The only substantive changes were the removal of references to general meetings (because all decisions are now taken by e-mail) and the establishment of an Association Croquet Laws Committee to mirror the Golf Croquet Rules Committee and replace the International Laws Committee which has supported the AC Laws since 2000. A draft Version 12 was sent to Members for consultation and produced very few comments. A slightly amended version was approved by Council under Topic 57 and will take effect from 1 January 2017 as Version 12.0.

WCF Regulations

The Event and Sports Regulations were updated under Topic 53. The change of greatest likely relevance to players concerns the timing of the block draw for world championships with a qualifying tournament which will now take place after the end of the qualifying tournament. The change was stimulated by the withdrawal of the ACWC top seed after the block draw had been published but before the qualifying tournament had started. Such a situation was not covered by the then current

Sports Regulations and both players and the MC were split on this issue of whether or not the blocks should be redrawn in such circumstances. The wide and increasing use of mobile phone technology by competitors allows much easier transmission of playing information both before and during an event.

The Finance Regulations have been updated (see Topic 61), primarily to take advantage of the greater protection offered to the WCF's UK assets by the UK's Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

Hall of Fame

There were no nominations in 2016.

Management Committee matters

2016 was another year without any unexpected administrative issues. Two successful World Championships were held and the first capital grant for development was made. The MC continued to operate harmoniously and effectively with Event Leads performing a vital role in supporting Event Hosts. The MC continues to discuss matters and make its decisions by e-mail, usually but not always following discussion at regular Skype conference calls. These are planned to be held once a month but may be held more or less frequently depending on the amount of business to discuss. A total of ten were held in 2016.

*The WCF Management Committee
2 January 2017*