

WCF Management Committee Report 2021

This report covers the year ended 31 December 2021.

1. MEMBERSHIP

Members and Recognised Croquet Organisations

Japan downgraded its status from Associate to RCO following confirmation that they now only have one club.

There are currently 29 Members of the WCF across 6 continents. 11 are Full members, 6 Associate Members and the remaining 12 are Recognised Croquet Organisations.

2. CHAMPIONSHIPS

Pandemic

The impact of the pandemic on international travel has made scheduling extremely difficult during 2021 and into 2022. The Management Committee (MC) has stayed in close communications with our hosts and have delayed decisions as late as possible to give events every chance of taking place. However, international travel was still too difficult for the first half of the year and most events scheduled were further delayed into 2022.

Events Held in 2021

2020 Golf Croquet World Team Championship Tier 2

By October, successful vaccine roll-out had helped to relax the pandemic's grip on the world sufficiently that the first WCF event since March 2020 was held in Spain 11-16 October 2021.

Spain won the event with Wales second. Reports from the event were extremely favourable, with all participants very complimentary of the Spanish hosts.

On behalf of all the participants and the other WCF Members, the MC would like to express its gratitude to the 2021 Event Hosts, namely Croquet Federation of Spain and to the three clubs: Real Club de Golf Vista Hermosa, Real Novo Sancti Petri Golf Club and Sherry Golf & Croquet.

Forthcoming Events

Five events are planned for 2022. The MC will continue to monitor the pandemic and its impact on international travel and will make final decisions, in consultation with the Event Hosts, on whether it is feasible to go ahead, some 4-6 months prior to each event.

The 2022 events below were all, pre-pandemic, scheduled for 2020 or 2021 and have been delayed into 2022.

2020 World Team Championship Tier 3

This event was originally re-scheduled for 2021 but had to be postponed again and is now scheduled for 20-23rd July 2022 at the Guildford & Godalming Club, England.

2022 Golf Croquet World Championship

This event was previously scheduled to take place in New Zealand in early 2022; however, with restrictions still in place, the event has been moved and is now scheduled to take place at the Sussex County Croquet Club, Sussex, England between 30th July to 7th August 2022, with a qualifier from 25th to 28th July at the Compton Croquet Club, Sussex, England.

In order to facilitate moving the event to the Sussex County Croquet Club at short notice, Council granted a request from the Croquet Association for additional funds to be passed to the club. They will therefore receive £6000 out of the entry fees.

2022 AC World Team Championship – Tiers 2 and 3

This event will be held between 9th to 14th August 2022 at the Budleigh Salterton Club, Devon, England. Invitations have been sent out requesting entries.

2022 AC World Team Championship – Tier 1 – The MacRobertson Shield

To be held at the Victorian Croquet Centre, Cairnlea, Melbourne, Australia between 12th to 29th November 2022.

Please see the WCF Website Forthcoming Events for 2023 and later championships:
worldcroquet.org/world-championships/upcoming-events/

3. STRATEGY

The 2020-2023 Business Plan, published in 2020, remains the current strategy.

4. CAPITAL GRANTS

The MC encourages any Member wishing to improve its facilities 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.

Latvia

In 2020, the Latvian Croquet Federation was awarded a grant of €15,000 to assist in building a new three-court club at Ikskile, about 30 km east of Riga. The grant amounts to 30% of the project cost and work was completed in May. The lawns opened in June. Since then the Club has had 7 Open Days and 5 coaching days. It ran several tournaments during the year, including the International Baltic Open GC tournament in September with 15 foreign players welcomed to Latvia as well as 9 local players.

5. DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

WCF Development Working Group

This group was largely inactive in 2021, other than dealing reactively with membership enquiries. The pandemic has not been helpful in terms of trying to increase the reach of the sport. It is hoped to revitalise the group in 2022.

There has however been development activity beyond the committee, particularly within four designated working groups and media/publicity.

Specific Working Groups

Four Working Groups were set up in 2020 and work continued through 2021. Three of the groups are chaired by MC members but otherwise consist of volunteers from the global playing community whose enthusiasm and interest are gratefully acknowledged.

Working Group 1 – Development of a global handicap system

After initial consideration of the matter this group is waiting for the output of Working Group 2 before work continues.

Working Group 2 – Development of a global player and games database

Phil Cordingley presented a feasibility study late in 2020 and this was approved by the MC. Phil is positive about the plan and regards it as a straightforward and feasible IT project. He hopes that Phase 1 (incorporation of the AC and GC rankings) can be achieved by early 2022.

Working Group 3 – Advantage GC

The aim was to develop a form of handicap GC which does not use extra strokes.

A successful trial of this was run by the Southern Federation in England. The MC would like to thank Roy Tillcock and the rest of this working group for their dedication and enthusiasm on this project.

The game was tested around the world with extremely positive feedback. A slight amendment to the Starting Scores table has proved necessary, and this can be found on the WCF Website:

worldcroquet.org/advantage-gc-2022-update/

The new variant is to be added to the GC Rules 6th edition when it is published early in 2022.

Working Group 4 – Development of online referee training and accreditation

Unfortunately, little progress was made on this initiative during 2021. The MC aim to push forward with this work during 2022.

WCF Media Working Group

This group was formed in late 2020 to review the WCF media presence. The group was chaired by Debbie Lines (ENG), with support from Begoña Elzaburu (ESP), Brian Lozano (MEX), Eugene Chang (ENG), Logan McCorkindale (NZL) and Samir Patel (ENG). The group's aim was to improve the online and social media presence of the WCF, including ensuring that our championships were properly advertised and recorded.

There were three main outputs from this group:

The WCF Website

This was re-launched using new software on 20th February. The MC would like to thank Alison's Websites for supporting Debbie Lines as she created the new site.

The website is focussed at providing a platform for sharing the latest news from the WCF, including:

- updates on our policies and regulations.
- Championship news - both upcoming and previous events.
- Publication of the GC and AC World Rankings
- The primary link for the AC Laws and the GC rules.
- The 'Croquet Information' menu includes global resources, advice sheets and links to other useful Croquet websites.

The following new features were added when the revised website was launched:

- A Google driven Translate capability.
- Historic documents from when the WCF was formed.
- A page showing Past Office Holders.
- Roll of Honour tables listing past Championships.
- There are also pages providing updates on the above-mentioned Development working groups.

The WCF YouTube channel

This site aims to showcase some of the very best videos of top class, international croquet from around the world. Playlists provide links straight to videos created by WCF Members and International croquet players. This site is now fully populated with predominantly WCF Championship videos, taken by various contributors. There are currently 304 subscribers.

Facebook Page

During 2021 Samir Patel continued to administer this page and we thank him for his time. Use of the page was pushed with more regular updates and links added on the new website. Use of the page has increased during the past year, and it now has 741 followers. The top three posts were the "15 years ago today" report of Mohamed Nasr winning the GC World Championship, Stephen's retirement and Amir's induction to the Hall of Fame.

Coaching

Understandably, due to the pandemic, very little coaching activity has been possible during the past two years. The MC hopes that as international travel becomes easier again, we will get more requests from our Members and RCOs for coaching assistance.

Coaching assistance generally takes two forms:

- i) by arranging for a coach to visit the Members country, or
- ii) by offering courses located at our more established Members' venues (typically the academies in England) for attendance by representatives from new or smaller members and RCOs.

The WCF highly recommend that smaller and more recent croquet nations arrange for people to learn the key skills needed to develop croquet locally, such as Coaching Courses or Refereeing courses.

The WCF will fund the travel expenses of a coach from their home to the WCF Member where the coaching will take place, with the Member then responsible for the travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses of that coach whilst inside the Member's country. If sending delegates to attend courses elsewhere, the MC remains willing to provide financial support, usually in the form of the course fees and a small travel grant. Please contact the Secretary-General in the first instance.

6. WORLD RANKINGS

The Ranking Regulations were published 22nd June 2021 and were followed by the formation of the Ranking Operations Committee.

GC and AC Country Rankings are now published every quarter on the WCF website.

The MC would like to thank the hard work of the Ranking Officers and their Assistant Ranking Officers (AROs), who ensure that results are entered properly. Without their efforts, the ranking system would not be able to produce such accurate data.

The AC Rankings continue to be run by Chris Williams.

Stephen Mulliner is in the process of handing over to Richard Bilton as GC Ranking Officer and we thank Stephen for his many years hard work. The AROs are: Richard Bilton for England, John Christie for New Zealand, Peter Freer for Australia and Felipe Mestanza for Spain.

7. COUNCIL BUSINESS

Council decision-making

The Council took five decisions in 2021 and there were five completed consultations. There were three elections, treasurer twice and three positions on the Management Committee. There are five open items as at the year end.

Decisions

- 88 7th Edition of the AC laws. Approved 24 January 2021.
- 89 Temporary amendment to Sports Regulations App 2 para 2.3. Approved 21 February 2021.
- 90 Ranking Regulations. Consultation Feb 21. Council approved 22 June 2021.
- 92 Refereeing Regulations. Approved 7 March 2021.
- 97 GCWC 2022 Additional Payment to Croquet Association. Approved.

Consultations:

- 91 Gate Ball and GAISF policy consultation. Closed 28 April.
- 94 Gender Policy Consultation. Closed 20 June.
- 95 Regional Governance Consultation. Closed 20 June.
- 96 CNZ Event Frequency Paper.
- 98 Updates to WCF Statutes and WCF Event Regulations. Closed 20 October.

Elections:

- 93 Treasurer election. Closed 23rd May 2021.
- 99 Management Committee and New Treasurer Elections 2022.

8. STATUTES & REGULATIONS

Ranking Regulations [Topic 90]

The Ranking Regulations v.1 were published 22nd June 2021.

Refereeing Regulations [Topic 92]

Version 5.1 was published on 9th March 2021.

Temporary Amendment to the Sports Regulations, Appendix 2, paragraph 2.3 [Topic 89]

On 22nd February 2021, the MC published a temporary Amendment to the Sports Regulations to allow for the reduced numbers of games played by some players due to the pandemic during 2020 and 2021. The new wording is:

2.3 Subject to paragraph 7.4, no player shall be awarded a Ranking Place unless he or she has played a minimum of 10 ranked games in the 24 months ending on the Allocation Date or, if relevant, the date on which a vacancy arises. However, no minimum game requirement applies to the award of Membership Places or Wild Card Places or to entries to any Qualifying Tournament.”

9. RULES AND LAWS

WCF Laws of Association Croquet [Topic 88]

The WCF Association Croquet Laws Committee completed its work on the new 7th Edition of the AC Laws in December 2020. Following Consultation, and then a vote, the new laws were published on 9 February 2021.

The MC is very grateful to the chairman, Graeme Roberts (NZL), and his colleagues Liz Fleming (AUS), Martyn Selman (USA) and Ian Vincent (ENG). All four have been re-appointed by their respective national bodies to serve from 2021 to 2024.

WCF Rules of Golf Croquet [Topic 100]

The WCF Golf Croquet Rules Committee has worked hard during 2021 to produce a draft 6th Edition of the GC Rules. The consultation for this will finish on 15 January 2022. The GC Rules Committee plan to submit a final draft for approval early in 2022.

Brian Boutel (NZL), the chairman, Jeff Hill (USA), Stephen Mulliner (ENG) and Amir Ramsis (EGY) have all been re-appointed by their respective national bodies to serve from 2021 to 2024.

10. COUNCIL CONSULTATIONS

Gateball Consultation [Topic 91]

Dave Underhill is the President of the Swiss Croquet Federation and the Swiss Gateball Association and a Board Member of the World Gateball Union. He invited other Members and RCOs to comment on the idea of croquet and Gateball merging in some way. The MC asked Members and RCOs to comment on whether the WCF's existing policy towards Gateball remained appropriate, namely:

“The WCF recognises the World Gateball Union as a fellow promoter of mallet sports. Gateball and croquet are sports with different natures and playing requirements, and the two sports operate on quite different scales. Accordingly, the WCF does not seek a merger or alliance with the WGU and does not believe a joint approach to the World Games or Olympics would be successful. We are open to consultation at an administrative level where appropriate.”

There was a very low response from Members but the consensus was for the current policy to remain in place.

GAISF Multi-Sports [Topic 91]

Following the consultation, there was clear support for the WCF MC's position, namely that no particular action is required in this regard until such time as the WCF has 30 members likely to satisfy the GAISF criteria for membership. At that time it would be appropriate to re-evaluate the situation and potentially begin to work towards Observer, and subsequently Full, membership of GAISF. The MC wishes to express its gratitude to Enrique Prados (ESP) who has provided helpful advice in exploring this matter.

Gender Policy [Topic 94]

The MC asked Members to consult on a draft Gender Policy. Feedback was mixed but it was clear that the policy as written needed further revisions. Following announcements from various National Sports Councils and the International Olympic Committee that they are in the process of reviewing their policies, the MC decided to wait until these are published before finalising the WCF Policy. We expect the IOC policy to be published early in 2022.

Regional Governance [Topics 95 and 98 refer]

In May, Roberts Stafekis, on behalf of various interested parties from our European Members, submitted a paper for consideration by Members. The paper summarised the key benefits that were envisaged and asked Members if they supported the adoption of a principle of regional governance, under the umbrella of the WCF. Specifically, Council were asked their views on the formation of a European Regional committee.

The results were mainly positive, and the MC drafted the relevant Statute and Event Regulation changes. A consultation on these amendments closed on 20th October with some constructive amendments suggested from Members, mainly requesting further clarification on how the WCF would overview and control the new regional committee. The MC redrafted the amendments and these were put to Council for approval on 8th December. This vote closes on 6th January 2022.

Frequency of Championships [Topic 96]

A discussion paper was received from Croquet New Zealand asking to reduce the frequency of Championships in order to reduce pressure on players' time and on CNZ costs. A Consultation with Members was held which was inconclusive. The MC decided to gather further information by surveying top players. Three surveys were created: Golf Croquet, Association Croquet and Women's Events. These went out to approximately 650 players across all our Members and RCOs.

The results of the survey are still being analysed and will be shared with Members in the New Year.

11. ELECTIONS

Treasurer [Topics 93 and 99 refer]

Elections were held twice for Treasurer.

Topic 93 - Chris Clarke was elected on 23rd May 2021. However, due to problems operating the WCF bank accounts from New Zealand, Chris felt unable to fulfil the role and resigned in September.

Topic 99 - An election was held in November 2021 and was won by Peter Payne, who starts his role on 1st January 2022 for a four-year term.

Management Committee [Topic 99]

Geoff Young and Peter Landrebe finish their terms of office on 31st December 2021 and we wish them

well both on and off the croquet lawn.

Elections for the MC were held in November and Robert Stafeckis was re-elected for another four-year term. Joining the MC from 1st January 2022 are Begoña Elizaburu (ESP) and Graeme Roberts (NZL).

Amir Ramsis resigned from the Management Committee on 26th December 2021. This leaves a vacant position on the MC. The MC will contact Members early next year regarding how to fill this vacant position. We thank Amir for his many years of service, including his 8 years as President, and wish him well with all his future endeavours.

12. OTHER MC BUSINESS

Hall of Fame

The MC congratulate Amir Ramsis Naguib who was elected to the Hall of Fame on 11th November. All the Hall of Fame Members can be seen on the WCF Website "Hall of Fame" pages.

Forward Event Scheduling

This would normally be a ten-year plan, but due to the consultation on frequency and also due to the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, the plan currently only goes out to the end of 2024. The MC expect to publish the new schedule early in 2022 following full analysis of the Frequency Survey.

Newsletters

Newsletters are published on the WCF website approximately every three 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.

Other matters

There were no other matters of note to report which have not been covered elsewhere. The MC continues to operate efficiently by email discussions and decisions with the added support of monthly video conference calls.

Members of the Management Committee

The members of the WCF Management Committee for 2021 were:

- Ian Burridge (WAL), President
- Chris Clarke (NZL), Treasurer (May 21 to September 21)
- Hal Denton (USA)
- Peter Landrebe (AUS)
- Debbie Lines (ENG), Secretary-General (from 1st September 2021)
- Stephen Mulliner (ENG), Secretary-General (to 31st August 2021)
- Samir Patel (ENG)
- Amir Ramsis (EGY)
- Roberts Stafeckis (LVA)
- Geoff Young (NZL)

Secretary-General

And lastly, we wish Stephen Mulliner well in his retirement from the WCF and thank him for his many years of service and hard work. He retired as Secretary-General on 31 August 2021 after completing his second four-year term, having also previously served as an elected member of the Management Committee.

The MC appointed Debbie Lines (ENG) as Acting Secretary-General on 1 September 2021 and she formally becomes Secretary-General on 1 January 2022 for a four-year term.



Debbie Lines

Secretary-General
31st December 2021