

WCF Management Committee Report 2023

This report covers the year ended 31st December 2023.

1. MEMBERSHIP

Members and Recognised Croquet Organisations

As at 1st January 2024 there were 29 Members of the WCF across 6 continents. 13 are Full members, 5 are Associates and the remainder are Recognised Croquet Organisations (RCOs).

Following growth in Mexico, in March 2023 they upgraded to Associate Membership. In September we approved both Wales and Germany upgrading from Associate to Full Member.

2. CHAMPIONSHIPS

WCF Events Held in 2023

The post Covid catch-up impacted 2023 which meant that we held a record 5 World Championships. On top of this the ERC held 3 events (see details in the ERC section below).

All the players were surveyed after the championships and these can be found on the WCF website: <https://worldcroquet.org/world-championships/world-championship-surveys/>. These surveys, together with the host post event reports, have already been used to update the 'Guidance to Bidders' document, reissued on 13th December. A summary of some of the key changes include:

- Event website. The MC no longer require hosts to set up a dedicated website. Instead, use of their own website and/or Facebook pages is recommended. Upload of programme to the WCF webpage is also an option.
- Communication to players and officials during events. This has been updated to reflect the availability of modern communication methods. The use of both CroquetScores commentary section and WhatsApp groups is advocated.
- Tournament Managers briefing. More emphasis is now recommended in providing this in advance via email and/or website. This allows players to read and absorb the information in their own time and, where language is an issue, they can translate as needed. In addition, if feasible, a Q&A with the Manager before the event starts is still recommended best practice.
- Qualifiers. This remains a host managed event, however, there are certain requirements for this event, namely that it produces a list of qualifiers (and reserves) in order, with no ties. The WCF Tournament Group will now provide more guidance and assistance to Qualifier Managers.
- Management of rain. Ensure all venues understand when to stop play, when and how to re-start play and if possible, have equipment in place, with trained personnel, in order to remove excess water as quickly as possible.
- Changes to items that should be included in the Event Bid, including live-streaming, safeguarding and arrangements for the qualifier.

The Tournament Reports for all our previous WCF championships can be found on:

www.worldcroquet.org/world-championships/championship-archives/.

Championship Roll of Honour listings can be found on <https://worldcroquet.org/world-championships/world-championship-roll-of-honour-tables/>

Links to CroquetScores can be found on each event report.

2023 Women's AC World Championship

Champion: Debbie Lines, England

<https://worldcroquet.org/2023-womens-association-croquet-world-championship-champion-debbie-lines-eng/>

2023 Under 21 GC World Championship

Champion: Aston Wade, England

<https://worldcroquet.org/2023-under-21-gc-world-championship-winner-aston-wade-eng/>

2023 AC World Championship

Champion: Robert Fulford, England

<https://worldcroquet.org/2023-ac-world-championship-winner-robert-fulford-eng/>

2023 Women's GC World Championship

Champion: Jamie Gumbrell, Australia

<https://worldcroquet.org/2023-golf-croquet-womens-world-championship/>

2023 Over 50's GC World Championship

Champion: Ahmed el Mahdy, Egypt

<https://worldcroquet.org/2023-over-50s-golf-croquet-world-championship/>

The WCF Management Committee would like to express our thanks to the all the hosts and their various armies of volunteers. Without the tireless efforts of clubs and volunteers throughout the world, we could not host our championships, and we really appreciate the hard work that goes into making each and everyone of them a success.

3. STRATEGY

The 2020-2023 Business Plan finishes at the end of this year. With a new President starting on 1st January, the next Business Plan will be delayed until the first half of 2024. Update of the business plan within 6 months of a new presidents start had been informally agreed 4 years ago, but not written into the statutes. This change is currently with Members as part of a collection of changes currently undergoing consultation (Topic 131).

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.

Topic 122 was approved on 17th January 2023. This approved a grant to Telč Croquet Club, Czech Republic for €15,000 grant to build two additional lawns. This will make the facility a four lawn club. At time of writing the lawns are still under construction and we expect to pay out the grant upon completion.

5. EUROPEAN REGIONAL COMMITTEE (ERC)

The ERC has now been running for 2 years.

Events:

Committee:

The ERC is not operating a separate website but has several dedicated pages on the WCF website. Further information regarding the operation and activities of the ERC can be found on page:

www.worldcroquet.org/european-regional-committee-erc/.

6. DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Specific Working Groups

In 2023 there were five Development Working Groups. Progress has been slow but see below for a brief synopsis of activity.

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

Phil Cordingley presented a draft outline to the Working Group in November 2022. Little progress was made during 2023 although Phil has advised that he is currently loading the AC Rankings data into the model. This is high-lighting some glitches with the design which he is working through. He is being assisted by our AC Ranking Officer, Chris Williams.

Working Group 1 – Development of a global handicap system

This group has been waiting for the output of Working Group 2. Following the closure of WG1, a review of this project is needed.

Working Group 4 – Development of online referee training and accreditation

In December we launched a suite of modules providing a complete study plan of the GC rules, suitable for those wishing to study all or part of the rules. As at year end, there were approx. 15 students studying the material. During Q1 of 2024 we will finalise social media support set-up and put in place an on-line test which will provide students with a “Certificate of Completion” and a score. Please see the new page on the WCF website which has further details: <https://worldcroquet.org/online-rules-training-and-study-pack/>

The MC would like to thank Ian Shore from the Chiltern Croquet Academy for his work preparing this course material, and his on-going work preparing the test questions and supporting the students.

Working Group 5 – AC Regeneration

On hold, pending the resignation of the Chair in September 2023. No activity was completed during 2023. The group aims to identify ways in which the WCF, at a global level, can help with the regeneration of Association Croquet. How to re-energise this initiative will be discussed with the new Management Committee early in 2024.

7. WCF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

The WCF Website

The website continues to operate well. No issues.

The WCF YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/worldcroquet

This site continues 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. There are currently 384 subscribers.

Facebook Page www.facebook.com/WorldCroquet

This site continues to post news items on a regular basis. It now has 1089 followers.

Live Streaming

All the WCF Championships this year have featured extensive livestreaming. The growth in capability of this has been phenomenal, with numbers of viewers much increased. Players around the world now expect to get livestreaming. However, the MC are conscious that the cost, in terms of both money and volunteer effort, is large and not all events may be able to offer the same levels going forward. We will continue to work with hosts to provide the best livestreaming possible.

Our thanks to all the many volunteers involved this year.

Newsletters

Newsletters are published on the WCF website approximately every three to four 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.

8. COURSES

Sweden Referee training: The WCF should like to thank Stephen Mulliner for flying to Sweden earlier this year to provide them with a Referees Course. He had a busy time of it, with 9 people attending the GC course and 6 the AC course. Well done to all those who attended and who are now able to use their skills to support play in Sweden.

Coaching assistance generally takes two forms:

- i) by arranging for a coach to visit the Member's 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.

9. COUNCIL BUSINESS

Council decision-making

The Council made 7 decisions in 2023. There were three elections.

There are 4 open consultations at the year-end which are due to close during January.

Decisions

- 119 Equipment Regulations – approved
- 121 2023 Budget – approved
- 122 Capital Grant €15,000 for Czech-Moravian CA – approved
- 123 Mexico election to Associate Member – approved
- 124 Deutscher Krokett Bund upgrade from Associate to Full Member – approved
- 125 Wales CA upgrade from Associate to Full Member – approved
- 133 2024 Budget for Member approval – closes 31st January 2024

Consultations:

- 126 GC Knock Out Seeding consultation – closes 14th January 2024
- 130 Code of Conduct and Disciplinary policy – closes 31st January 2024
- 131 Proposed Statute and Regulation amendments – closes 31st January 2024
- 132 Ranking amendments: Returners and Fast Improvers – closes 31st January 2024

Elections:

- 127 ERC 4 positions on committee – closed 31.12.23.
- 128 President and MC – closed 3.12.23.
- 129 Election of Independent Examiner for 2024 – vote closes 4th January 2024

10. STATUTES & REGULATIONS

<https://worldcroquet.org/wcf-business/statutes-regulations/>

Equipment Regulations [Topic 119]

The consultation completed in January and after some further updates, version 6.4 was published on 24th December. A document listing the currently approved Balls and Hoops is now published separately.

Topic 131

This consultation includes proposed updates to the Statutes, the Admin Regulations, the Event Regulations, the Sports Regulations and the Finance Regulations.

11. WORLD RANKINGS

GC Ranking System [Topic 132]

Proposals to amend the system to improve how Returners and Fast Improvers are managed are currently with Council.

Other Ranking Matters

GC and AC Country Rankings continue to be 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.

Richard Bilton took over as GC Ranking Officer. The GC AROs are: Richard Bilton for England, John Christie for New Zealand, Peter Freer for Australia, Jeff Soo for USA and Eduardo de la Rocha for Spain.

12. HALL OF FAME

This year there was only one new inductee – Ahmed Hamroush. He was inducted posthumously but we expect to present his certificate to his son soon.

The citations for all our Hall of Fame Members can be seen on the WCF Webpage:

<https://worldcroquet.org/world-croquet-federation/hall-of-fame/wcf-hall-of-fame-members/>

13. FINANCE

The 2022 yearend accounts were reviewed by Brian Havill our Independent Examiner and published on the website in late December.

The 2024 Budget is currently with Members – see Topic 133. The vote to approve the budget closes at the end of January.

Banking:

Barclays Bank unexpectedly closed down our two accounts with them (current and savings) in September. The bank is known for making onerous compliance requests and summarily shutting down accounts.

Current a/c - after being refused by the first bank we approached (MetroBank: reason for refusal unknown), we applied to 3 other banks, all of which have now been opened – Lloyds, Virgin and Unity Trust. The MC are currently reviewing how to operate the current accounts most effectively.

Deposit a/c - £50k has been deposited in a Lloyds bank term deposit a/c at 3.6% interest, maturing on 20th December 2024.

The Friends of WCF savings account is held with United Trust and the balance is now £41,861. This has been placed for two years at 5% maturing 22nd December 2025.

14. ELECTIONS

Congratulations to the following who were elected in late December.

WCF President: José Álvarez-Sala

Management Committee: Samir Patel, Jeff Soo.

ERC: Roberts Stafeckis (re-elected), Alan Looney, Duncan Catterall and Michael Böer.

Independent Examiner: Brian Havill (vote closes 4th January 2024)

15. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Thank you to Ian BurrIDGE

After four years as President, Ian BurrIDGE is moving on to other challenges. Ian started as President on 1st January 2020 and most ably guided the WCF through the difficult times of the pandemic. This involved the delay and re-organisation of many events and a complete re-think of the forward calendar. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, during his time as President, Ian efficiently steered the MC through its day-to-day activities, such as event planning, grants to help small clubs, improving the regulations and much more. Specific projects he helped the WCF to deliver included Advantage GC, the setup and structure of the European Regional Committee. He has also ably managed the European Club League through its first year and continues as manager for 2024.

The MC would like to thank Ian for his hard work and commitment. We wish him all the best for the future.

Members of the Management Committee

As of January 1st 2024, we welcome José Álvarez-Sala as the new President and Jeff Soo to the MC.

The members of the WCF Management Committee during 2023 were:

Ian BurrIDGE (Wales), President – retired December 2023.
Debbie Lines (England), Secretary-General
Peter Payne (Switzerland), Treasurer
Begoña Elzaburu (Spain)
Graeme Roberts (New Zealand)
Mohamed Raslan (Egypt)
Roberts Stafeckis (Latvia)
Samir Patel (England) – re-elected.
Hal Denton (United States) – retired December 2023.

The MC wish to thank Hal for his work over the past few years and wish him well.

16. OTHER MC BUSINESS

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.



Debbie Lines
Secretary-General
7th January 2024