2024 GC World Championship Player Survey – 18 to 26 October, USA

WCF Event Player Survey

45 responses out of 80 players. USA 10, England 9, Spain 6, Australia 3, New Zealand 3, Germany 2, South Africa 2, Sweden 2, Wales 2, Belgium 1, Canada 1, Egypt 1, Hong Kong 1, Mexico 1, Scotland 1.

Question	*Results*	*Comments*
Were the pre-event organisation and information provided satisfactory?	Yes = 36 No = 9	Some players expressed concerns with respect to the email of 7th September. They advised this caused them some stress. Some asked for a full explanation. *MC response:* *A summary of the pre-event issues experienced was sent to all Players and Members on 28th November 2024.*
Did you attend the player briefing? If so, was the information well-presented and useful? Was the scheduling of the briefing convenient?	Yes = 39 Did not attend = 6	All responses were positive. Some players missed due to flight times. Some of the comments: *Would appreciate an email or physical notes from the briefing.* *Extremely thorough & well presented. Questions answered very directly .*
Did you find the communications to players during the event to be effective?	Yes = 44 No = 1	The combined use of CroquetScores and WhatsApp seems to have been well received.
Were the official functions and social events well organised and enjoyable? [Opening and Closing ceremonies, Gala Dinner]	Yes = 44 No = 1	Opening Ceremony: generally well received, although some players commented that the flag parade was a bit disorganised. Gala Dinner: - Some disruption due to play continuing late, so some arrived very late - Pre-advised dietary requests were not met - The draw couldn't be done as scheduled, so was very late - Quite a few players had concerns regarding the pricing of the dinner – not good value

Were your number of games each day too many, not enough or about right?	Yes = 42 No = 3	Most players felt there were enough games, but would have preferred a few more. The main concerns were the long waits between games, with too much waiting around.
Was the overall duration of the event too long, too short or about right?	Yes = 43 No =2	A few requested a slightly shorter event, to make it easier for those still working. There was a request for a shorter qualifier, 3 days not 4.
Was the event well-managed?	Yes = 44 No = 1	A huge number of people expressed their thanks to Jeff and his team of helpers. Almost all the comments thought the event was well managed. A lot of comments were made regarding how good the communication was. There were a few constructive comments made regarding lawn allocations, however, these were generally after having said how well managed the event was overall. *"I think there was too much focus on which lawns a certain block was supposed to play on on a particular day. Sometimes I saw empty lawns for quite some time at the same time as players were ready to play, but the block and free lawn didn't match (at least that was my understanding). That was just a small thing though, the event was very well managed."* *"The time between matches was too long. Several matches could have been played in the time spent waiting. The court allocation should not have been so strict - if there were matches waiting and courts available, they should start. Keeping the blocks to their allocated group of courts is what caused matches to be carried over."*
Was the event well-referee'd?	Yes = 37 No = 8	Again, a lot of the players passed on their thanks to Cheryl and her team of hard-working referees. They appreciate the long hours put in over many days. Some players thought the hoop setting was poor on the first day, with the referees uncertain how to set the Quadway hoops. This improved quickly. There were a few players who thought they had had some poor decisions made, but nothing very major was expressed. Also some comments that some of the referees seemed quite inexperienced. *"Saw a couple of wrong referee calls being made, but nothing to serious considering the amount of games being played"*

		"Some referees did display inexperience but Cheryl Bromley did an excellent job as TR and the event will have been a very valuable learning experience. The enthusiasm which caused some of the referees to travel long distances to attend was impressive." The lack of sequence umpires was mentioned. See also later question on this matter. *"The decision not to let outplayers be sequence umpires was dreadful. There were many instances of a referee being told by an outplayer or spectator that a wrong ball had been played and then the referee simply going onto the lawn and telling them to play the next ball in sequence!!! On two occasions this led to a 50/50 hoop being left with "the ball next to play" right in front of it and ruined the entire game. Sequence umpires must be used."*
Were the courts of suitable quality?	Very good 13 Good 17 Okay 14 Poor 1	A variety of views regarding the lawns. The newer lawns seem to have been a bit bumpy, but most still thought they were okay. The lawn speeds across the 23 lawns seems to have varied quite a bit, and some found this difficult, especially if their opponent had played on a similar paced lawn in the preceding game, but they were having to change pace. Many expressed their thanks to the CBCC club for their hard work getting the facility ready.
Were the balls of suitable quality?	Yes = 39 No = 6	On the whole most thought the Mark III Dawson balls were okay, however, there were some concerns expressed regarding the visible seam and the roundness. Some expressed a wish for a slightly 'livelier' ball. *"Difficult to know whether to say yes or no. They were adequate, but had a big seam and various dimensions and some started to discolour. WCF needs to take a stance and recommend which is the best ball available in the next few months to avoid different countries going down different routes and World Championships swapping between 3 different makes of balls for the next 25 years."* *MC Response:* The WCF is responsible for approving balls for Championship use. All those so

		approved are eligible to be used and it is up to those putting in bids for events to decide which of the balls approved they wish to use. The WCF will work with a supplier if we think the quality of the ball has deteriorated since it was approved. If it is considered that a particular ball has become unsuitable, we would either review its approval, or notify any concerns via a WCF website news item. The currently approved balls can be found on the WCF website: https://worldcroquet.org/wcf-business/statutes-regulations/
Were the hoops well set?	Yes = 39 No = 6	The work of the hoop setters was commended. Many thanked them for their time and hard work. Generally, the hoops seem to have been well set in firm ground. Some complaints that they came loose too easily. One or two said they thought they could have been re-set a bit more often.
How would you rate the venue overall, including facilities and catering?	Very good = 34 Good = 7 Satisfactory = 4	A wide range of comments. Many liked having the whole event at one venue. A lot of players called out the catering, saying that it was excellent, with just one or two comments that it was good, but a bit expensive.
We set up a WhatsApp group for players and officials to use prior to the event. Please provide any feedback on this service.		Those that used it found it extremely useful. Some said it worked well in concert with the Commentary on Croquet Scores, and would like to keep both in use for future events.
How would you rate the event overall? Please share any other feedback you believe will be useful.	Very good = 32 Good = 11 Satisfactory = 2	Some of the key comments are included below: *"Block stage- unsure why we don't incorporate double banking. The days were very long and if your block had an early match that went for 4-5 hours, light became an issue. "* MC response: GC played at this level often includes players who hit the ball extremely hard. Double banking is discouraged for safety reasons for this reason.

		"I played in the Big Oyster which was great, but I felt it detracted a bit from the qualifier." MC response: the qualifier is generally managed and organised by the hosts, not the WCF. However, we encourage hosts to make the qualifier a prestigious event in its own right, with country flags flown if possible. *"The only thing I would say is that there shouldn't be players playing with out shoes."* MC response: the WCF clothing policy does not dictate the wearing, or not, of shoes. Hosts are encouraged to state whether this will be permissible in their Event Bid after consulting with the club(s) being used. Any player not wearing shoes should be made aware, by the TM, of the safety risk to their feet, and that they do so at their own risk. *"It would be better if the knockout was seeded based on DG after block play rather than including the play-offs. This causes potential for significant delay and is comparatively meaningless. "* *"The blocks should be split into two groups (eg. A-D and E-H, or A,C,E,G and B,D,F,H) and group 1 play in sessions 1 and 3 on day 1, and group 2 sessions 2 and 4, and then alternate for day 2-4. Day 5 should start with the matches most likely to affect playoffs."* *"More blocks, fewer players per block. Best of 5 for the main draw."* *"The new format for the knockout draw worked well and produced a very balanced draw where you didn't end up playing someone from your own block."* *"It would have been much better to stagger the starts of the semi-finals - say one at 9am and the other at 11.45am. This would have created a better atmosphere for the matches rather than splitting the crowd at the venue and providing less coverage to those watching the livestream."* MC Response: we will review the various comments above regarding the format.

		"There was no penalty for people disappearing during games. One of my opponents went off for 15/20 mins! I was just waiting. I am aware of it happening in other games too. Aside from a ref having a word there was nothing to deter this." MC Response: Jeff Soo, the Manager, was advised of this for one player and a warning was issued. Players should not be doing this unless there is some emergency, so please do always advise the Manager.
Extra Question: And lastly, it would help if you could provide your views on the concept of sequence umpires.		Most responded that they would welcome the addition of sequence umpires. Regarding who could do this, views were mixed as to whether this should be everyone, including spectators, or restricted to players and officials. Quite a few comments along the lines below: *"I think it is important to allow this. There were times I saw people about to play, or playing, a wrong ball. By the time a ref had been located and they had made sure of what was going on it was too late."* *"It's difficult for countries who have never used sequence umpires to have a genuine view on this - they need to see it in operation."* MC Response: The MC is aware that this has been trialled in some countries for many years now, with favourable results. The players feedback received also seems to be in favour. Regarding its use in WCF Championships, we will consult with Members more widely over the coming months.