

# Minutes of the SEMLA GCM 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014

## **Present:**

Trevor Rogers	(TR)	President & Reading
Peter Mundy	(PM)	Croydon
Miles Whittle	(MW)	Treasurer & Bath
Simon Peach	(SP)	South Referees Committee Chairman
John Maynard	(JM)	EVP, Disciplinary Chairman & Purley
Nik Roberts	(NR)	RDO & Bath
David Abini	(DA)	Birmingham
Dave Howie	(DH)	Blues
Mark Coups	(MC)	ELA
Kieran Balmer	(KB)	Secretary & Brighton

## **1. Apologies for Absence.**

Peter Compton (PC) EVP & Spencer  
Ray Wood (RW) Youth Development Chair  
Joey Burnett (JB) Maidstone

## **2. Acceptance of Minutes from the previous meeting.**

Noted that minutes from December 2013 meeting were not available;  
Noted that no meeting took place in January 2013.

## **3. Matters arising not included in the Agenda.**

None

## **4. President's Report**

As per written report, previously circulated.

TR noted that the news regarding Andy Davies was very good indeed.

## **5. Treasurer's Report**

As per written report, previously circulated.

*Steve Groves (SG), Welwyn, joined the call;  
Sam Spurrell (SS), MPC Liaison, joined the call.*

TR confirmed that the ELA email requesting budget figures had been sent to SEMLA in error. It was intended for the MPC.

NR to chase up Uni clubs that have not yet paid their SEMLA fee.

MW to send out reminders to all clubs that have yet to pay, and also to ask all Uni clubs to provide contact details for permanent Uni staff.

SG noted that Welwyn currently experiencing cashflow difficulties.

## **6. Secretary's Report.** - Nothing to report.

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## 7. Q&A session with Mark Coups: CEO of the English Lacrosse Association

MC thanked the meeting for the invitation to attend and invited questions.

a) PC submitted a question in advance via email;

“The issue I'd like to address to Mark is the low priority (as demonstrated by the failure to organise) that is given to the National u12s & u16s Competitions - these are the only 'National' Club Tournaments in Men's Lacrosse. At this point this year nothing seems to have been arranged - it should have been sorted out last July!

It will be a major step backwards if both or either of these events do not go ahead. Certainly the u12 event was set up during my time as South Junior bod and I believe Mark was looking after development for the ELA.

Does this event have any priority - will it happen?”

MC replied that the weather had been a major obstacle and as a result consideration was being given to a change of date for these competitions.

MC also noted that discussions were being had with the Women's game with a view to holding joint events at various ages, thereby justifying greater infrastructure commitments.

TR asked when we might hear more details on this subject. MC replied that further conversations were scheduled later in the week, and that discussion papers were available re joint events from next year onwards.

b) TR raised the subject of the unannounced removal of the free conference call facility, and the transfer of call costs to call participants.

MC replied that the previous system cost £10k per year to run, and that a review by the staff had suggested it was inefficient, based on usage analysis.

MC noted however that several other committees had also complained about the new system's transfer of costs to the end user.

MC further noted that there was now a 12-month contract in place so the option to change providers was not available, but suggested that the ELA could look at ways to make the system free to use for the end user.

TR asked how this could be achieved; MC replied that the ELA could pick up the costs.

In response to that statement, KB, SG all asked for the free call facility to be reintroduced as soon as possible, and the rest of the meeting was unanimous on this point.

MC asked TR to supply likely usage figures and agreed to try to reinstate free calls in time for the next SEMLA meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> March.

c) TR noted that at least 50 % of the clubs in the Men's game were in SEMLA, but these clubs were under-represented on the MPC due to the South only holding two votes. TR asked what could be done to rebalance this issue.

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MC noted that getting information from grassroots to decision-makers was a complex issue, and that particular difficulties appeared to exist in getting information from SEMLA and Yorkshire.

MC also noted that there is a plan to move away from the existing MPC / WPC structure to a National Playing Committee format – conversations starting this Easter, with implementation planned for Summer 2015.

MC explained that there would be gender splits at regional levels and that the hope was that this new structure would encourage greater participation.

MC noted that he had meetings booked with the chairs of the MPC and the WPC in the near future, and he looked forward to SEMLA's contribution to the discussions.

TR expressed doubts that the MPC would accurately communicate SEMLA's position on this, or any other subject of discussion. MC noted this but asked that SEMLA continue to try to actively involve itself in MPC negotiations.

PM expressed a hope that BUCS would be involved in this discussion, in order to continue the strong growth of the Uni game.

TR to discuss with JM and KB the formation of a group to liaise with the Women's game in the South – TR to inform Eddie Owens of the MPC.

d) SP noted the recent attempt by the MPC to force through a rule banning the playing of games with only one qualified referee. SP asked MC to outline his thoughts re referee development generally.

MC replied that he felt it was not a North / South issue as much as it was a Manchester / Everywhere else issue.

MC noted that growth in the game had made it a struggle to put referees in every game in some areas of the country.

MC also acknowledged that many refs also wanted to progress and improve and that it was important to support this AND deliver a uniform service to players – MC feel that it is possible to achieve both goals.

MC wished it noted that Jon Harrop's work in the South was fantastic, and that the ELA are very grateful for his efforts. MC added that the ELA is committed to assisting the South with Referee development.

PM noted that that the cost of Referee courses has become too high, and asked if they could be offered for a reduced price, or free.

MC replied that the ELA had to cover it's costs, whilst also looking at the areas where growth is desired. MC does not believe the current cost is prohibitive.

MC noted that 80% of current course attendees are Uni students, and stated that the ELA does not run these courses to generate a profit.

MC stated that the exact breakdown of course costs is available, and that the ELA regularly tries to access grants to cover costs.

e) KB and JM asked for the previous online registration system to be restored, with the old functionality that allowed any member to check to see who was registered with any given club to be included as a priority.

MC noted that this particular function had been removed for Data Protection Act reasons.

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MC explained that the ELA is looking for a way to provide a new facility for club secretaries to check their own club membership details, but he is unsure if inter-club access could be reinstated.

There were no further questions. TR thanked MC for his contribution and invited him to remain on the call. MC expressed his thanks to the meeting for inviting him to attend.

*Jon Cooper (JC), Fixtures Secretary, joined the call;*

*Rob Holmes (RH), Spencer, joined the call.*

**With the agreement of the meeting, agenda item 13 was brought forward.**

## **13. Fixture Secretary's Report**

As per written report, previously circulated.

JC added for clarity that it was Blues third team that had dropped out, not the Blues club as a whole!

Redraft of byelaw (7) (d) ready for distribution to and comment from clubs. KB to distribute; to be voted on in May AGM.

Rob Collinge's report re Sixes and County Tournament now available. KB to circulate for clubs to comment; matter to be put on agenda for March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

JC noted that Hampstead had conceded games, rare to see a Prem club do so. TR stated he had been in contact with Hampstead.

It was noted that Prem teams facing relegation might feel aggrieved at Hampstead "gifting" points to opponents by conceding away games, due to the possibility of it affecting the relegation picture.

RH and DH presented their cases for possible rescheduling of Blues v Spencer flags fixture due to international player selection. Extended discussion culminated in the meeting agreeing that it was not correct for such a decision to be made in a normal meeting. Blues advised that they would need to call an EGM and ask for a vote. Process for so doing was explained.

JC to look at drafting a policy to cover similar situations arising in future.

## **8. Youth Development Committee's Report.**

RW absent. Previously circulated written report summarised verbally by KB.

- Junior flags due to take place on 16<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> March;
- No u14 games have been played since Christmas due to weather;
- Invitations received to attend tournaments in Lugano (May) and Serbia (August);
- Awaiting confirmation of a New York School team (boys and girls) visiting in July – prospective fixtures already pencilled in.

**9. University Liaison Report.** - No current officer, so no report.

**10. South Manager Report.**

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NR noted that ELA regional officers had agreed to administer a four-region tournament; this format to be used to select two teams, from which a final South squad will be drawn. NR stated that neither he nor the regional officers would be able to coach the South Squad.

TR noted Chris White was unable to take up the role.

NR suggested that the regions supply their own coaches and also use the tournament as a means to provide more refereeing opportunities.

General consensus was to go ahead; NR therefore appointed South Manager.

## **11. Disciplinary and Complaints Panel Report.**

As per previously circulated written report: two expulsion fouls in December, both disposed of via fast track. Nothing at all in January.

JM noted the concerns that the fast track option was increasingly being used as a “soft” alternative.

JM referred to his new draft, previously circulated. General consensus was agreement with said draft.

JM noted discussion re MPC criticism of SEMLA disciplinary procedure.

SP keen to retain SEMLA’s existing format.

TR noted that the North and the South experience totally different disciplinary issues.

JM noted there had been a continuing reduction in expulsion fouls in SEMLA year on year.

KB noted that the North appears to have a disciplinary issue that is absent in the South, and questioned the appropriateness of adopting a “Northern” approach to “Southern” games.

MC noted that the MPC must make a recommendation to BUCS

## **12. Referee Secretary Report.**

Steve Jarvis currently on sabbatical, so no report. SP felt that all refereeing matters had been adequately covered in discussions re JM’s redraft of fast track procedure.

## **13. Fixture Secretary Report.** - Moved up agenda; detailed above.

## **14. RDO Report.**

NR noted that LDO recruitment was underway.

NR further noted new UK border controls anticipated to be a significant obstacle to any LDO wishing to stay here for more than a year.

NR noted a drop in applications volume – possibility of shortfall this year.

NR noted that the current focus in Surrey is upon the Women’s 2017 event. Male clubs will be approached and asked to assist, mainly with provision of volunteers. NR noted that there is a possibility of a festival running alongside, maybe featuring Men’s games.

NR advised that clubs are still being chased to provide membership figures.

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NR noted that Surrey Youth Games is scheduled for the same weekend as Bluesfest. Eleven boroughs will be trying to recruit for SYG, it will be delivered in the INTO Lacrosse non-contact format. There were 43 participants last year.

## **15. MPC Liaison Report.**

As per previously circulated written report.

SS noted that the MPC required a firm indication of SEMLA's position re the disciplinary procedure to be adopted for North / South games.

TR noted that JM will draft a response for SS to take back to MPC, based on and including the draft proposed byelaw referred to in JM's report at 11) above.

## **16. Any Other Business.**

PM noted that there are currently 83 Men's Uni teams, 90 Women's Uni teams and more than 30 lacrosse clubs but the publicity surrounding our sport is virtually zero.

PM proposed that Giles Clark / Splash PR be engaged for 3 months to provide Public Relations function.

PM noted that Danny Buckland of Epsom currently submits regular articles to the ELA, but PM wishes to go further and raise the profile of lacrosse in the national press. The Times regularly featured lacrosse during the 1960's but this is no longer the case.

PM asked for all clubs to consider providing written articles, and possibly video footage.

DS needs minutes of meetings provided earlier than currently.

**17. Date and Time of Next Meeting.** 7pm, Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014

**END**