Chess Arbiters Association

Minutes of the Annual General meeting held on Sunday 2nd August 2015 at Warwick University, Coventry. From 3pm until 5pm and 6-45pm until 8-50pm.

Apologies for absence-Peter Gibbs, Celia Gibbs, John Swain, Carl Tillotsen, Adrian Elwin, Priscilla Morris, David Sedgwick, Tom Thorpe, Jack Rudd, Kevin Staveley, David Thomas and Roger Edwards.

3pm - 5pm present-Lara Barnes, Alex McFarlane, Geoff Gammon, Paul Bielby, Tony Tatum, Tony Corfe, Alan Ruffle, Kevin Markey and Francis Bowers.

6-45 The above were joined by-Andrew de Santos, Stewart Reuben, Mike Gunn, David Welch, Matthew Carr, Neil Graham and guest – then associate member- Phil Ehr

Guest Speaker-Cancelled

Minutes of the last AGM dated 5th May 2013 were taken as read.

Amendments were made as follows

Item 7-A paragraph was changed to “David Sedgwick had considered it necessary as a short term measure for the ECF to licence such people during the early months of the FIDE Arbiters licence scheme. I did not say that such people would be included in the new ECF level one category.”

For the avoidance of doubt the ECF now applies for FIDE arbiters licences only for people who have passed either the ECF arbiters examination or who already hold either the International Arbiters title or the FIDE arbiter’s title.

Item 4- Chairman's report- Change Tournament organisers meeting to International organisers’ seminar.

There were no matters arising

Lara Barnes suggested that item 2 on the Agenda should be discussed first. She suggested that if it failed there was no point in continuing the meeting. She invited Tony Corfe to open the debate.

Has the CAA outlived its usefulness and if so should it continue ?

Tony Corfe-Explained that he had become concerned that the meeting scheduled for 6-45pm would be of insufficient length to properly discuss the important issues on the agenda and so he had taken steps during the past few days to have an initial meeting at 3-00pm, not necessarily meeting the requirements of a quorum, to allow for increased opportunity for discussion and to provide recommendations for the official meeting at 6-45pm. He observed that there were nine members present and that a quorum required ten.

The meeting felt that the CAA should continue but with a raised profile. It felt that its influence was dissipated by its current peripheral standing and that it was probably worthy of an ECF management board position. An example of this was that there had been a number of rule changes made at FIDE level at which the ECF had input but not the CAA; the words 'unwieldy' and 'lobbying' were used but other examples were made. The meeting felt we were ineffectual or could improve in the below categories

Training of Arbiters - CAA to select arbiters and recommend them to ECF

ECF to take responsibility for training of arbiters and expenses incurred by coaches. The meeting felt that this was not an expense that should be met from CAA membership fees.

Pressure other National Associations

Prevent impression of lack of cohesion

Having our views known within FIDE regarding rule changes, new laws, anti cheating measures, etc .

It was noted that the current ECF Managers of Arbiters were Matthew Carr (Home) and David Sedgwick (International).

(1) Should all CAA arbiters seek FIDE recognition?

It may be desirable for all arbiters to attain International status but currently that should be left to the individual. England, Scotland and Wales did not put people forward to FIDE without them satisfying national status.

It was noted that IAs, FAs and NAs who were inactive risked having to pay the FIDE fees again.

Lara Barnes -Recognition by FIDE was to be encouraged. It was generally recognised that British arbiters working on the continent were au fait with the rules and were good organisers but should be wary of the South African scenario (see item 6 to follow).

(3) Should there be revision courses for experienced arbiters ?

There was general approval of the idea of organising seminars for experienced arbiters. It was suggested that these should be held every four years after the revision of the Laws prior to the AGM and that venues in North and South of the country be sought to implement this. It was felt that AMtoo was a splendid publication and that Arbiters in general were abreast of current legislation.

The meeting applauded and acknowledged the input by Alex McFarlane into AMtoo.

(4) Should there be seminars on the laws of chess for league captains ?

It was noted that most leagues were still using mechanical clocks and that 10.2 was alive in local league use. The meeting felt that it would probably be beneficial for local arbiters to provide the necessary coaching, for an appropriate fee, paid by that league.

Attention was drawn to the fact that there was very often confusion between the laws of chess and local league laws.

(5) Should the CAA seek to have greater influence over decisions taken by FIDE?

This subject was referred to in item (2) The meeting felt that the first step should be that the Managers of Arbiters Matthew Carr and David Sedgwick and others be allowed 12 months to seek to raise the profile of the CAA within the ECF.

Dave Welch made the point that the board had arbiters in a number of ECF posts and there might be reluctance to have a specific Director of Arbiters.

Alan Ruffle replied that that was the entire point. Arbiters in general were responsible for most of the chess organisation in the country-The 'British' and Annual tournaments in particular.

(6) After attending the 'world Youth Championships' In South Africa there was a failure by the organisers to pay the arbiters.

Lara Barnes and Alex McFarlane informed the meeting that they still had not been paid and they were still pursuing this although some of the other arbiters had been paid. In clarification, they explained that the problem had been caused by some optimistic accounting with regard to hotel accommodation.

(7) Suggested agreed rates for arbiters attending English events.

Lara Barnes reported-on the continent, it was a regular practice for an arbiter to be paid for his services; In Scotland it is customary to recognise the arbiters with the prize winners in the form of an expenses envelope and applause. In England it was mostly considered to be a voluntary role.

Dave Welch suggested that at the very least an arbiter should not feel out of pocket. Alan Ruffle stated that an arbiter does not have the option of taking a half point bye and was still on duty between rounds organising the draw for the next round.

There was general agreement that many players do not appreciate the amount of work that goes into organising a chess tournament i.e. the arbiter usually works hand in glove with tournament organiser organising or assisting with-administration, seeking a venue, legal requirements, parking, game supervision, enforcement of the laws of chess etc.

Alan Ruffle suggested that a recommended basic set of fees should be stipulated by the CAA namely, hotel expenses, 45 pence/mile travel expenses (as per current HMRC directive) and subsistence. Individual arbiters involved in their own home event may prefer to resist taking any kind of payment. This should be acknowledged in some way, perhaps by a mention on the entry form.

Dave Welch made the point that many tournament organisers very often provided bed/breakfast and subsistence. Alex McFarlane pointed out that there had been an HMRC directive and he was concerned about legal implications with regard to the minimum wage if payments were not related directly to costs incurred.

Neil Graham suggested that account should be taken as to whether the tournament was making a profit or not.

David Welch pointed out that none of this was enforceable. The meeting agreed not to pursue any formal fees recommendations.

Stewart Reuben as Chairman of the ECF awards committee took on board the suggestion that a trophy be awarded to the most efficient/meritorious action by an arbiter.

AOB-

Managers of Arbiters Matthew Carr and David Sedgwick to research the exact position of CRB requirements with regard to the feeling that many had that arbiters should be cleared even if it were not necessary in law.

2016 'British Championships' - Bournemouth

The meeting agreed that the 'Minutes' should be shown on relevant forums

Chairperson’s report-Lara Barnes - Submitted and approved. Lara stated she had learned a lot

Secretary's report- Alan Ruffle - Had not been able to set a date for the 2014 AGM

Treasurers report - Tony Corfe- Submitted and approved subject to auditing by Richard Jones

Election of officers - All returned unopposed

Chairperson - Lara Barnes

Secretary - Alan Ruffle

Treasurer - Tony Corfe

Chief Arbiter - Alex McFarlane

Information officer - Alex McFarlane

Committee - David Welch, Kevin Staveley and Neville Belinfante.

ECF delegate - Neville Belinfante.

Chess Scotland Delegate - Alex McFarlane

Welsh Chess Union - Kevin Staveley

Independent Examiner - Richard Jones

Date of next meeting - There was much debate about this which concluded in a suggestion that it be left to the committee. Alan Ruffle resisted this and insisted on some kind of guidance. It was agreed that the AGM 2016 would be in July 2016 in Birmingham by default probably at the 4NCL Weekender but to be confirmed.

Meeting closed 8-50pm

Alan Ruffle

Secretary

Chess Arbiters Association