

## **Minutes of the UK Racketlon 2018 Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 28th October 2018 at the Letchworth Squash & Tennis Club**

**Attendees:** Ray Jordan (Chair, RJ), James Pope (Secretary, JP), Dan Busby (DB), Jack Bishop (JB), Dominique Ford (DF), Dianne Baker (DiB), George Roberts (GR), Keith Lesser (KL).

**Apologies:** Jon Spinks (JS), Alex Du Noyer (ADN), Lindsay Johnson-Farge (LJF), Sam Barker (SB), Luke Barnes (LB), Johnny Bispham (JoB)

The meeting commenced at 16:55.

### **1. Welcome, Apologies and Minutes of the EGM**

RJ welcomed everyone to the 2018 Annual General Meeting. The apologies (as listed above) were presented verbally by the chair. The minutes of the 2017 EGM were approved unanimously by those in attendance.

### **2. Finances including saving / spending implications (ADN)**

The company treasurer, ADN was unable to attend the 2018 AGM and he sent a report by e-mail. This report was presented by DB and the key points were:

- Our accounts end of year is 30 Sep 2018
- Cash balance was £1889.38. This doesn't entry fees for Herts and Richard Lawrence, kept separate for these calculations. It is worth noting that due to our involvement with the IWT Malta Open, we invoice Malta Tourism on behalf of the tournament. Which will then be paid out on additional tournament costs. As such our cash balance contains £275.30 that will be paid out. As a result this makes our balance £1,614.08. Malta 2018 was year 2 of 3 year contract, after this would expect this to go to FIR to sort out in future.
- Payments upcoming:
  - FIR fee - €600 (payable in March)
  - Insurance payments - £410 (still to pay until mid-July on a Direct Debit).
  - Website - ~£20 a quarter
  - Tournament Software Licence: €75 (start of calendar year)
- No tournaments made a significant loss in 2018. Even a small profit was made by the British Championships which is a very positive outcome.

With a view to the need to spend some of our current surplus funds JP suggested we buy badminton nets. This is because of concerns that a venue may have poor quality nets which affects play and (badminton) player experience. According to DiB, a good quality badminton net costs in the vicinity of £50. While there were some minor concerns regarding where we store the nets, overall a positive feeling that this was worth it. RJ noted it was important, that like the TT barriers, we ensure good communication to enable this equipment to be passed from tournament to tournament. KL suggested we also need an additional TT net (in addition to the one we already own). DB suggested that we have a selection of spare equipment for newcomers. With respect to spending money to help publicise the sport, JB has a contact who has previously and will again provide us with high quality promotional materials.

RJ noted that KL was still (voluntarily) doing the books along with ADN, and thanked him for his continuing assistance.

GR pointed out that shuttles are our main expenditure, with Yehlex costing us £17 a tube for 25 tubes. DB and DiB suggested they can get tubes at £13 a tube but for 100 tubes. Some debate whether we would use and whether we could store this volume of shuttles over a season. **ACTION:** DB & DiB will investigate the possibility. JB reminded us that Luke Barnes is keen for us to actually work out these numbers of usage by tournament with a view to chasing sponsorship opportunities.

KL suggests that we could give a small payment (in kind) for people doing the desk, i.e. Helen Ford (HF). DF points out the while HF wouldn't go for a free entry, she always likes (a free) lunch. RJ points out that Steve Bispham is always happy to do it for petrol and lunch, while JB points out his dad will do it for a t-shirt! KL suggested that tournaments were there could be issues with queues forming at the tennis courts should ensure a volunteer has been tasked to cover the tennis, as it can make a difference on events are busy tennis courts. **ACTION:** JP to inform JS that he has the option to book a desk person and we will cover expenses and lunch.

RJ points out we should buy some squash goggles for juniors and then enforce the rule on wearing goggles. DiB suggested we want a slush fund to have for paying for umpires at big events. General agreement in the room. With respect to booking referees, RJ pointed out he went through the respective sports refereeing bodies to get the refs. DF asked how much they were paid. RJ said it was a variable rate, but primarily they did it for expenses and food. DB feels we should make referees mandatory at the super series events, because they should be classed as major events. There was again general agreement, and RJ said that in the event of a tournament making a loss due to the payment of referees, then the UK Racketlon finances would cover these losses.

### **3. Roles & Elections**

JB is resigning as tour organiser and JB has proposed that he be replaced by JS. JP seconded this and it was approved unanimously. RJ & DF to look at a Racketlon in the London Youth Games in the taster section of the event, however they may be too young for Racketlon. Duncan Stahl (DS) has been removed from Companies House as a director to avoid of any conflict of interest complaints as he is now the FIR President, he will remain as an adviser to UK Racketlon. KL reminds the room that UK Racketlon will not always want the same things as the FIR. SB was lauded by the room for his work in Zurich, UK Racketlon social media was immensely successful at the World Championships. KL suggested we may need a particular specialism officer (a "Minister without Portfolio" of sorts) for tough problems, such as the County Championships which requires perhaps a lot of effort over a short period.

### **4. 2019 UK Tour plus super series**

JB reported on the status of the 2019 UK Tour, this work has been principally been done by JS.

The County Championships was discussed in some detail, in particular because it was cancelled this year due to concerns it would lose money due to a lack of teams being available. JP indicated that to run counties we need a Tournament Director (TD), venue, and DB also highlighted that it needed to be in a format to maximise interest. GR suggested Keele and KL suggested that we could do the Counties on the Saturday and the Staffordshire Open Super Series tournament on Sunday in, as JB

suggested, a “Festival of Racketlon”. This idea had a lot of support and we will investigate it further, GR indicated that previously Keele University had offered us cheap accommodation, which could be advantageous! There are some concerns with clashes with the FIR World Tour, in particular the World Doubles and King of Rackets event is in early June. However, given the strength of this option, it was decided that JP will TD a Keele County Championships venue with GR on the ground to ensure contact with the venue.

JB reported that a lot of tournaments sold out early in 2018, but we have also had fewer tournaments. JP reports that average entry is up across the season. DiB queried running an incentive, but GR & KL pointed out that it is hard to do, as you have to do a manual refund, as it is not possible to organise such things through Tournament Software. DiB appreciated that it was a very tricky issue.

DB asked DF about Limsfied, DF is asking Kathryn Milne about running an event there next year. DB reported that JS is keen for events in Wales and Scotland to make a truly UK tour. DB thinks that it might be possible to try it even if we make a loss. GR said that Amrit Dhadda is apparently keen on the idea of Cardiff Met University as a venue as he is local to that area.

**ACTION:** DB requested that it be noted in the minutes as an action that all UK Tour event organisers double check the World Tour before we book a UK Tour event. This avoids clashes with popular events (for example, events like the Champion’s League).

JB proposed that Round Robins should be 15 up. RJ (presuming this was a scheduling and tennis queuing issue) pointed out that each tournament is different. Factors such as the number of courts available and the number of RR draws affects the schedule and tennis queues. DiB makes the point that there is a player experience angle to this question. JB thinks this is especially crucial for the juniors and vets. JP points out player experience is key. DiB is very keen on 15, DF agreed, stating that she felt that 11 up is too quick, but 21 up is too long on occasion and therefore 15 up makes sense. This is broadly positively received and will be discussed further.

## **5. AOB of Future Points of Discussion.**

RJ had proposed in the agenda a number of key issues for the UK Racketlon board to address over the coming months and was keen to receive any thoughts from the wider community on these issues. The following were presented (all comments by RJ unless specified):

- a. Sponsorship & Equipment- It was highlighted that the Mantis deal worked very well. Staffs Open tennis courts damaged the balls, but broadly they were popular and played well throughout their usage. Shuttles were discussed previously with associated Action. JB reports that Karakal are very keen to sponsor the sport and offer a discount for rackets etc. DB feels strongly that super series sponsorship from a well known brand, such as Karakal would be beneficial to the sport.
- b. Membership – JB will move towards the management of that, including formalising some sort of membership scheme. JP will support JB through his data basing role.
- c. London Open – UK Racketlon will help in this event wherever we can, but DS will be taking the financial risk.
- d. Training Camps – DB is formulating ideas for a training camp to be targeted at the juniors. It will be in school holidays with the first one aimed at a selection of our promising juniors, with a view to thinking February half term. KL suggests a more social general training camp, and DB acknowledges that social camps can help for

people who are perhaps daunted by tournament and also for building community spirit.

- e. Venues and Organisers database – DB or KL has a copy and this will be shared with the board.
- f. Website – JP has stated he will be undertaking a review of website content over the winter.
- g. Rankings – JoB has an interest in investigating whether we can improve on our current system. However until such (if any) change is proposed we will maintain the system developed by Richard Boreham (RB) based on player ratings.
- h. Roles - DB points out we need the right people in the right job. DB also suggested a website article focussed on encouraging people to run tournaments.
- i. Minorities – RJ and DF to work on this i.e. the London Youth Games (previously mentioned).
- j. Improving experience – It was noted that it is important that we ensure we are doing the basics right, this includes things such as ensuring we have our branded items (TT barriers) and good quality nets. The focus of this should be putting player experience at the heart of our planning.

#### **6. AOB from the room**

DiB suggested that we could do an “End of Season” do. This would be a social event without a tournament with end of season awards. There is some interest, but the issue where the event would be held and how many would attend.

KL reminds the room that he is happy to sponsor tournaments that are local to his business. He also made an offer of sponsorship in kind, for example if we needed admin assistance, he could provide some of his admin staffs time.

With no further AOB, the meeting closed 18:19.

Minutes compiled by James Pope (30<sup>th</sup> October 2018)

Minutes approved by UK Racketlon board and posted online (19<sup>th</sup> November 2018)