



**SSS Competitions Committee Meeting (91)  
14<sup>th</sup> September 2023  
1000-1400**

**MINUTES**

**Attendees:**

- Eamonn Laird (Chair, Dundee Staff) - EL
- Chris Purdie (SSS Head of Competitions) - CP
- Jess Baillie (SSS Event Coordinator) – JB
- Polly Pearse (Fixture Administrator Representative, Edinburgh Staff) - PP
- Sophie Charlton (Staff Representative, Stirling Staff) – SC
- Johnathan Macleod (Staff Representative, UWS Staff) - JM
- Ryan Cairns (Sabbatical Officer Representative, Napier Sabb) - RC
- Sherief Kholeif (Sports Chair Representative, Basketball Chair) – SK
- Ben Rowlings (SSS Sport and Active Health Coordinator) - BR

**Apologies:**

- Phoebe Moncur (Sabbatical Officer Representative, RGU Sabb) – PM
- Eilidh Paterson (SSS Head of Development) – EP

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

- Apologies from PM and EP. BR attending in place of EP
- Welcome from EL

**2. Introductions and Committee Overview**

- Icebreaker
  - Day job
  - Role on the group
  - Something you're looking forward to in the season ahead
- Role of the Committee (in current SSS governance structure)
  - New Sport Proposals evaluation and approval – balancing alongside the development work of the SSS team
  - New Event Proposals evaluation and approval – financial viability and seeking suitable additions to improve the experience of the students
  - Centralised Fixtures - review and development
  - National Squads – review and development
- Clarity of Committee Roles
  - Chair – leading the Committee and representing the Committee at SSS Executive Committee
  - Staff Representatives – providing the perspective of a current staff member involved in HE/FE sport to the work being undertaken
  - Student Representatives – seek the opinions of the other Sports Sabbaticals to feed in to the Committee
  - Fixture Administration Representative – provide the perspectives of the Fixtures Administrators group
  - Sports Chair Representative – alert the Sports Chairs to when the meetings are taking place and seek any opinions that may feed in to the agenda

**3. Standing Updates**

#### **a. SSS Development Committee**

BR updated the Committee on key highlights being undertaken by the development team:

##### Active Health (AH)

- Active Campus Network - 10 roles have been filled for ACC and recruitment has begun for 8 others. Aiming for completion of the entire process by December
- College Participation – Colleges must be SSS-affiliated members to allow their students to participate in competitions as 'Students', otherwise will need to compete in limited 'Guest' slots at higher entry fees
- AH Forum – Will be taking place at Dundee in November to include all institutions in the Active Health conversation. SAMH will have some involvement too. Diary invitations going out soon
- Mental Health and Wellbeing element of sport will be worked on to generally tie-in certain campaigns alongside the competitions hosted e.g. ASH Scotland's Stop Smoking Day as part of Conference Finals

##### Learning and People

- Reffin' Brilliant – Now has a new logo and will have a more detail-oriented approach this year to support the tracking of qualified officials and their deployment
- Leadership Programme – Recruitment for the new cohort is underway and the team are always happy to receive opinions to help keep that being an impactful developmental programme

##### Inclusion and Culture

- EP has moved in to Head of Development role. EL passed along his congratulations for this promotion
- We are in the process of concluding the recruitment for EP's replacement in the Inclusion and Culture Coordinator

**Action: Development Team to provide details of the Reffin' Brilliant programme to inform the Competitions Committee**

#### **b. SSS Fixtures Forum**

PP updated the Committee to say the first Fixtures Forum Meeting had been held 3 weeks prior and 3 weeks ago and included:

- SSS updates on their plans (most points will be covered later in the agenda)
- BUCS key regulation updates (provided by BUCS staff) which were particularly useful for the new Fixture Administrators who have joined this year
- BUCS fixture administration process update as we transition from SSS doing the majority of the Scottish league administration in the past
- Playwaze training offered by JB (BUCS offering additional BUCSPlay training on a separate date)

PP is maintaining a Microsoft Teams channel to ensure the current Fixture Administrators are on there and know it is a space to hold discussions which affect the network

#### **c. SSS Chairs**

SK very new in to the role but excited to get started

SK will be present at the Chair Development Day taking place at Strathclyde Students on 30<sup>th</sup> September (a training day designed to upskill the Sports Chairs and lead volunteers on the SSS Development Groups to aid event delivery and broader development work) – plans to meet as many people there as possible

#### **d. Sabbatical Forum**

RC updated the Committee to say that the Sabb Forum was held a few weeks ago. The Forum will be working on a Cost of Living Project this year to look at how we can make things easier for students who have been hit very hard by the financial crisis. SK advised that University of Glasgow runs a hardship fund to help with gym memberships and club fees and may encompass individual affiliation fees

Murray Bushell (University of Stirling Sports President, and former SSS Competitions Committee member) has been elected as the Sabbatical Forum Chair for the academic year ahead.

Active Campus work is being activated by the Sabbs to provide more free and accessible activity for students

Affiliation fees were discussed at the Forum to see if anything can be done to reduce the cost of affiliation fees being charged to students

- JM updated to say that EP and Jo Foster (SSS Learning and People Coordinator) are planning an SGB Forum to support SGB understanding of the student sector and aid specific discussion around affiliation fees
- SC requested advice on how institutions are spreading the cost of the various affiliation fees (SSS, BUCS and SGB) as they look at their budgets
  - Dundee and Edinburgh - Affiliations handled by Sports Union budget. Team entries covered by clubs at Dundee but Edinburgh also support team entries
  - UWS – Similar to Edinburgh but reflecting on changes being brought in by SGBs which aren't allowing for 'bulk affiliations'
- SC requested advice on travel to events/fixtures in England (i.e. BUCS competitions)
  - Dundee – Clubs were asked to set out a budget which accounted for a potential progression in to a competition that required further
  - Edinburgh – Sports Union covers the travel for the higher level BUCS tiers of competition e.g. Premier, Vase etc. but lower level BUCS competitions are to be covered by clubs themselves
  - UWS – Cover everything from the Sports Union budget to ease the logistics, however individual athletes need to seek additional funding and provide proof of standard to be eligible for higher level BUCS competition

#### **4. SSS Competitions Overview**

##### **a. Centralised Leagues and SSS Leagues**

CP provided an update on the entries received for the Centralised Leagues and SSS Leagues so far (entries for some SSS leagues will close on 18<sup>th</sup> September therefore changes are still possible). Entries were trending positively, with any that teams absent from previous years' usually indicating a sensible decision from the institution due to previous evidence of inability to field teams for fixtures, causing disruption

##### **b. Events**

JB updated the Committee on a few key areas:

- 110 events are planned this year which remains ambitious due to the challenges being faced in seeking venues and rising costs
- Challenges are being found in specific sports being impacted by venue alterations (Athletics), external competition dates (Judo) and Netball (rising venue costs)
- Positive outcomes have been found in Karate (will be joining the SSGames weekend this year) and Trampoline (will have minimal logistics to consider due to venue choices)
- Medals will slowly start to be phased out of having engraving on the back as SSS manages rising costs

##### **c. National Squads**

CP updated the Committee on 3 key areas:

- Squad Numbers – This year there is a plan to host 14 squads across 8 sports (the addition of football and shinty this year)
- Support Staff – A Training Day will be hosted to upskill the key volunteers leading the programmes and begin the developmental pathway for them to progress in to further national activity
  - A vacancy for the Basketball National Squad Programme will be going live soon so all Committee Members are asked to recommend any suitable candidates to apply
- Kit – Conversations with New Balance are progressing and kit for multiple squads is either ordered or already arrived, therefore minimising the distress caused last year of late deliveries
  - Netball will be offering the option for some players to wear a vest and shorts rather than dresses in a move to provide more inclusive kit

**Action: CP to update the Committee on plans for the National Squad Staff Development Day**

##### **d. BUCS Competitions Committee**

CP is the Scottish Representative for the Scottish Region on the BUCS Competitions Committee which meets 5 times a year.

Chris sends proposals for amendments to the BUCS programme to the Scottish institutions to

request feedback to provide to BUCS on behalf of Scotland and welcomes all opinions, however feedback numbers are often low. CP recognises that not all papers are relevant to the Scottish institutions (e.g. Rugby League rather than Union), however there are some sporting activities which are relevant to Scottish members to feedback is encouraged to ensure the Scottish voice is heard.

#### **e. 23-24 Fixture Administration**

This year BUCS have taken over the administration of the BUCS Leagues in Scotland therefore SSS staff will be working with the members to ascertain what is working and what may need to be tweaked to better serve the Scottish members. SSS work closely with BUCS and will continue to develop this partnership to benefit the Scottish members.

### **5. SSS Competitions Operational Plan 23-24**

- CP highlighted key elements of the Operational Plan that has been drafted for the year ahead to ensure the Committee are aware. The full document is available on the Basecamp group:
  - BUCS Fixture completion rate – Aiming for 90% completion average across all BUCS Leagues. Monitoring this will help establish the impact of the BUCS fixture administration changes this year
  - SSS Fixtures – 85% completion rate for 23-24 SSS Leagues to improve upon the 70% completion rate from 22-23. Working with the institutions to ensure the clubs enter a realistic number of teams to help fulfil matches
  - Deliver 110 events – Realistic target to maintain the number of events we were able to complete last year in the current financial climate which is making facility hire harder
  - Facility MoU agreements with 8 institutions – CP thanked the institutions for their support in providing some free facility access for SSS events as they enable the competitions to be sustainable and accessible in terms of entry costs. This year SSS will be working to adapt and extend the MoU agreements for the 2024-27 period
  - Participation numbers – Looking to increase the number of participants who identify as Male, Female and Other across the activity we are offering this year
- Discussion regarding the timing of SSS Fixture release:
  - PP recognises challenges faced in fulfilling SSS fixtures, especially those requiring indoor space, due to the later release than BUCS fixtures
  - CP advised that there is a balance to be struck between two options:
    - 1) Aligning with the BUCS entry timeline but running the risk of institutions entering teams without knowing their team numbers
    - 2) Offering the later entry deadline to help institutions welcome new club members in September
  - SC agreed with PP and advised that some institutions are able to protect facility space for the leagues ahead of them being released

**Action: CP and PP will ask the Fixtures Forum in December about the best timeframe for SSS league entries and whether an earlier entry deadline and withdrawal policy may be more helpful**

### **6. Future Planning**

The Committee are encouraged to consider any other aspects of the competition programme the Committee should look in to and pass it along to EL and CP.

Discussion about future meeting dates resulted in a decision for the final meeting to take place on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024 and, ideally, in person. Additionally, the November meeting will be altered to 30<sup>th</sup> November instead to fit EL's diary

**Action: JB to send diary invitation for 30<sup>th</sup> May to everyone**

**Action: CP and EL to arrange in person meeting for 30<sup>th</sup> May**

**Action: JB to alter November diary invitation**

### **7. AOB**

- Basecamp access for Captains
  - JB advised that Captains should try to access Basecamp via their generic club email addresses in the first instance, as the use of generic club addresses are easier to manage than the annual rotation of personal addresses

- There is a SSS Staff Member which leads on each sport, therefore if any club is having issues accessing Basecamp the institution should send them in the direction of the relevant staff member to seek support
- Rule and Regulations for SSS activity
  - JB advised that SSS Sport Development Groups work alongside SSS staff to develop and update the Rules and Regulations for SSS activity
- SSS League completion deadlines
  - JB advised that the Rules and Regulations for each SSS league can be found on the relevant Sports page on the SSS website or the relevant Event page

#### **8. Close**

EL thanked everyone for their attendance and reiterated that the Committee are welcome to stay in touch in between meetings

#### **9. Actions**

- Development Team to provide details of the Reffin' Brilliant programme to inform the Competitions Committee
- CP to update the Committee on plans for the National Squad Staff Development Day
- CP and PP will ask the Fixtures Forum in December about the best timeframe for SSS league entries and whether an earlier entry deadline and withdrawal policy may be more helpful
- JB to send diary invitation for 30th May
- CP and EL to arrange in-person meeting for 30th May
- JB to alter November diary invitation