



## **SSS Competitions Committee Meeting (89)**

**6<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**1000-1300**

### **AGENDA**

#### **Attendees:**

- Eamonn Laird (Chair, Dundee Staff) - EL
- Chris Purdie (SSS Head of Competitions) - CP
- Jess Barrows (SSS Event Coordinator) – JB
- Polly Pearce (Fixture Administrator Representative, Edinburgh Staff) - PP
- Sophie Charlton (Staff Representative, Stirling Staff) - SC
- Joel Adebanjo (Sabbatical Officer Representative, RGU Sabb) - JA
- Johnathan Macleod (Staff Representative, UWS Staff) - JM
- Eilidh Paterson (SSS Inclusion and Culture Coordinator) – EP
- Steven Li (SSS Competitions Intern) - SL

#### **Apologies:**

- Gregor Malcolm (Sports Chair Representative, Cross Country Chair) – GM
- Murray Bushell (Sabbatical Officer Representative, Stirling Sabb) - MB

#### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

EL welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the two apologies received. Minutes from the last meeting were approved.

#### **2. Standing Updates**

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

IL provided an update from the Development Committee, including these key points:

- Governance – The Committee is reviewing its structure in order to re-establish its purpose and function
- Club Membership Audit – This year we have recorded our highest ever members via the audit - 41250 members (3% increase on last year)
- Conference Planning – The Conference is over 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> June at QMU. Content suggestions are welcome
- Reffin' Brilliant – There is still space (financially and calendar-wise) to host/support courses between now and the end of the Semester
- Parliament – IL and Eilidh Paterson (SSS Inclusion and Culture Coordinator) recently presented evidence around Women and Girls participation in sport. The student community are 'bucking the trend' in terms of female participation, as wider community sport sees a significant discrepancy in participation between the genders
- Concussion Education – ConcussEd discussions underway to develop an online learning platform across the sector

- Tayside and Fife Performance Group – IL is involved in this group and hopes a pathway could be developed to help them see the opportunities in HE and FE too
- Active Campus Coordinators – SSS are about to begin recruitment for the people who will be leading the work in the Colleges involved in the Active Campus project:
  - SC aware that the universities could join up with colleges to help them with access to facilities and coaching etc. Stirling have a few college students train with them for local colleges, for example. CP advised that training is perfectly fine but college students couldn't represent the university in BUCS. SSS have a Playing for Another Institution Policy which allows for more flexibility on this with SSS competitions (found on SSS website)
  - JM identified work at UWS which enables wider work with colleges that go beyond sport so it could be supportive
  - EL and IL aware of close connection between Abertay and Dundee universities with the colleges too
  - IL identified that the main role of the Active Campus Coordinator will be bridge within the college itself and developing relationships with community clubs – plus developing student leaders – to develop a foundation to build from. This means there may not be a huge impact on competitions to start with

EL asked IL if he had an update on the Orienteering entry numbers (an action from the last meeting) and if he could please help spread the word on the New Event Proposal deadlines which are upcoming to the Sports Development Groups

**Action: IL to send JB the Orienteering entry numbers**

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

PP updated the group to say that it has been a rush to the end of the season to fit everything in, but the majority of the 22-23 season is completed. Other discussion points for that group include:

- Cricket Leagues are starting soon
- Some Playoffs will be taking place to determine League positions for 23-24
- Team entries have already opened for next season and are closing on 5<sup>th</sup> May

In the last meeting the point was raised about BUCS team point deductions due to team line numbers being too low. PP updated to say that BUCS have agreed to waive this for the sports which take place in a centralised format for this season, though we are yet to know if this will stand beyond the current season

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

GM was unable to attend the meeting but sent over his points over email in advance:

- The Chairs Network has been quiet during the height of competition season
- The Chairs are pleased to see more Colleges affiliating with SSS this year as it can only be a positive thing going forward and hopefully they become regular affiliates
- Conference Finals looked great on social media and hopefully was reflected on the ground also. Well done to the SSS team for putting the event together – and to the teams competing!
- One personal struggle GM recognised is that it is harder to feel connected to the student community now that he has graduated so seeks support and advice from Chairs who are also in his position. Current students provide the “climate” of the sport within the student population

SSS will be recruiting for a number of Chairs in the coming weeks to catch students before they finish for the summer

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

- Varsity has been going on around Scotland but often clashed with BUCS League deadlines so led to difficulties in getting league fixtures finished. JA recommended that everyone considers when Varsity days are scheduled in order to avoid the clash and frustration caused
  - JW agreed that asking institutions to avoid the clash with deadlines is important and wonders if a proposal should be submitted to ask the sector to agree to this
  - CP explained that members see this as a high priority and would therefore encourage collaboration wherever possible, however rules would be difficult to enforce and may not be the place for SSS to take any action on
- Participation has increased overall this year coming out of the pandemic so in general things feel very positive in the Sabb Forum

### **3. SSS Competitions Overview**

#### **a. BUCS**

##### **i) SSS Agreement and Fixture Administration**

CP updated the Committee on an updated relationship with BUCS which has been agreed in principle, which involves BUCS looking after the majority of fixture administration and rules/governance compliance from next season onwards. Fixture administration is a time-consuming piece of work for SSS Staff and, as BUCS hold ultimate jurisdiction on rules, SSS staff can often do no more than advise rather than sanction. BUCS are recruiting staff to support with this work however there has been limited consultation on the role so SSS are unaware of the specifics

There are 4 elements to fixture administration currently supported by SSS:

- Fixture creation before the season begins – Under discussion with BUCS currently in order to ascertain responsibility. CP seeks the perspective of Competitions Committee
- Rules/governance compliance – Will sit more with BUCS
- Centralised Fixtures – Will likely remain with SSS but needs to be confirmed
- Conference Finals – Will likely remain with SSS

Discussion around this update on BUCS fixture administration followed:

- PP sees benefit of SSS organising the fixtures ahead of the season as it enables the adjustment of fixtures to suit the wider season e.g. Netball Tier 1 discussion. However, it is a time-consuming task for staff so if there isn't as much money going towards that then it may be better to sit with BUCS
- EL identified there is a lot of variance in Scotland to the 'norm' in the rest of BUCS competitions, e.g. weekend matches for netball and volleyball, so BUCS would be asked to protect that adjustment if they are involved in fixture generation
- PP suggested asking the Fixture Admins for their consideration and an action was agreed between CP and PP to ask the Forum for their consideration
- BUCS have been working to bring in more consistency across the BUCS member hosts in Conference Finals delivery but JB fed back to BUCS to say that the input of BUCS in Scottish Finals hasn't been felt strongly in Scotland. SSS will therefore aim to keep up the delivery of the event and deem the cost worth it for the high member experience provided

**Action: CP and PP to talk to the Fixtures Forum to establish member opinions on the change in BUCS fixture administration before next Fixtures Forum**

CP advised that the discussion with BUCS would be finalised before the next Fixtures Forum and definitely before the next Competitions Committee.

Removing the BUCS fixture administration element would free up time in CP and Sean Berthelsen's (SSS Competitions Assistant) workload to support the further professionalisation and improvement of our events which have grown in number and complexity over time - requiring more staff involvement to retain this. Additionally, the National Squad and SSS Leagues will be considered further - alongside the partnership/relationship work with BUCS, members and possible sponsors overall

## **ii) League Completion**

CP provided an update on the League Completion rate at this stage via a Supporting Paper, however a complete update will be provided ahead of the final meeting of the season once all exceptions have been finalised:

- 'Missing' matches on the sheet are ones that have been Voided or awarded as a Walkover. Those listed as 'Completed' are matches which actually took place
- Areas of concern - Rugby and Tier 3 Tennis were highlighted but, overall, the majority of the leagues have done well and we have approximated a 90% completion rate for the year until we have finalised
  - Fast Four Tennis – Brought in by BUCS to speed up the process and get everyone a better experience. It appears to have been well-received and SC recognised the benefit to the Stirling team
- Further details around the Centralised Fixture model and its impact on Fixture Completion Rate will be discussed later in the meeting

## **b. Finance Update**

CP supplied the Committee with an update on the overall Competition Finance so far:

- Target - Competitions may not reach the maximum target set by the SSS Executive Committee, however this is not a concern for SSS as the business is doing well and Comps will still make a reasonable contribution towards the rest of SSS work
- Moving Parts - CP noted that majority of sports still have expenditure to come out from events which have taken place in the season, but there are still a few to take place (e.g. Athletics and Archery Outdoor Championships), therefore some income will be coming in too
- Missing Competitions - The paper supplied indicates some sports didn't have any competition this year however there is work underway to bring as many of them back in 23-24 (e.g. Boxing and Cheer)
- Sports of Interest - CP highlighted two sports which showed significant difference to last year:
  - Golf lost a significant number of entries this year so this, alongside other adjustments to the programme, has led to a predicted loss in the Golf budget
  - Trampoline had increased expenditure this year due to the protection and movement of the trampolines needed to boost the numbers at certain venues. In addition, discussions with the Development Group is needed in order to streamline the purchases required and

## **4. Events**

### **a. Highlights So Far**

JB updated the group with positive developments in the Event calendar this season:

- Karate Championships – hosted the first in-person Championships for the SS Karate community in 3 years. It ran at a small loss but this was signed off in advance of the

event as SSS recognised that the event needed to run in order to regain the 'common memory' which is so critical for event interest

- Sailing and Playwaze - Sailing ran two events through Playwaze this year which helped us keep an eye on the way things were running and helped them to deliver well-run events on budget
- Tennis Mixed Doubles had significant interest this year and almost doubled entries from last year!

#### **b. Event Feedback**

We have received 356 responses via the survey so far (significantly increased since the last Committee Meeting). A full analysis will be provided for the next Committee Meeting, however we are sitting in a very positive position with all areas hitting the target of 4/5 mark. Upon a quick look, areas which received lower averages related to Centralised League competition e.g. location of venue and the scheduling (Futsal and Fencing standing out as the two most prominent), so this will be taken in to the Centralised Fixture review work

#### **c. Intern**

JB has been supported for the last 6 weeks by Steven Li, a 2<sup>nd</sup> University of Edinburgh student studying Sport and Recreational Management student. SL has been involved with the arrangement of Conference Finals, Feedback Survey Data and processing Event Results. Alongside the internship, Steven has been developing a project looking in to the experiences that people within the LGBTQI community have in sport and how this can benefit the inclusion of SSS events. SL commented that he's greatly enjoyed his time with SSS.

#### **d. New Event Proposals 23-24 Deadline**

Due to the rearrangement of the final Competitions Committee Meeting to now be in early June (from originally being in late May), the suggestion was proposed by JB that we extend the deadline for New Event Proposals to be submitted (usually late April). It was agreed by the Committee that extending the deadline would be best and the new date would be communicated out in due course

### **5. Centralised Fixtures**

As advised by CP, the Centralised League fixtures have now been completed with the exception of two matches (not played on original dates due to injuries). CP expects the Centralised Model will remain despite changes underway re. BUCS fixture administration as it is a member service we provide.

As part of the review process, CP will be reaching out to the members to ask how the model has been received and, assuming they are happy for this to continue, if there are any areas which can be tweaked in the future to further improve it. Futsal will be specifically focused on with a working group formed between the Futsal Development Group, Fixture Admins and SSS staff

**Action: CP to reach out to members about Centralised League Model delivery and form Futsal Working Group**

### **6. National Squads**

#### **a. Summary of Activity**

- Kit – There is a conversation underway with New Balance as they have created multiple issues in the sourcing of playing kit for the National Squads. CP has identified this as something that will need to be focused on next year to improve the overall experience
- Programme:
  - Basketball – Activity taking place this weekend in Dundee
  - Cricket – First competition will be taking place next weekend with follow-up competition taking place later in the season

- Cross Country – Activity is finished for the season but work to be done to follow-up on the vests
- Netball – Competition scheduled for May at Pleasance
- Sailing – Have completed their winter programme but also plan to have a summer yachting one in place which will involve more planning
- Volleyball – Activity taking place on 14<sup>th</sup> April as part of the Invitational
- Tier 3 Sports – Futsal and Shinty were categorised as Tier 3 sports for National Squads this year and have planned (delivered, in the case of Futsal) a basic opportunity for players to compete as a merged squad against opposition from outside Scotland

#### **b. Volunteer Support Staff**

CP grateful to the volunteers involved in delivering the National Squads and for their understanding around the kit in particular. SSS will be working on a development pathway for the volunteers to help support the people involved in the programme find links to progress on to wider supporting roles in the sector

#### **c. Next Season Planning**

May receive further proposals for National Squads for next season, e.g. Football, and will ask all current National Squad sports to 're-apply' with a view to review this season. The deadline for New National Squad Sports will be set to the same date as the New Event Proposals (in May), as it was recognised that confirming the squads in August was not enough time to get fully organised

#### **d. Finance**

The Committee raised that the final costs per player would ideally be released in advance of the invoices being sent out, in order to support the Player and SU conversation

- SC and JM recognised that confusion around this has been felt in the Volunteer Support Staff as well as the SUs
- CP advised that a proposed budget and communication plan to the players/SUs will be worked on over the summer to ensure the players are aware of the potential costs coming their way
- CP recognises the need to seek the best contacts within each institution for conversations around National Squad finance too

#### **Action: CP to evaluate and improve communication re. National Squad finances between players, SUs and Volunteer Staff**

EL asked if there is any communication from members around the quality of the programme offered for the National Squads. CP mentioned that nothing had yet been received of this nature and that he is still talking through the Home Nations option (working with English Universities and BUCS) as the 'how' and 'why' still to be finalised

### **7. Special Projects**

EL asked the Committee prior to the meeting to consider if there is anything at the higher level (not SSS sport-specific) that we think may be of benefit to the overall SSS competition delivery and to fire in any ideas which come up.

CP noted that the Table Tennis Special Projects application is yet to be fully approved but the landscape indicates it will go ahead. This will support the delivery of the Centralised League Fixtures and possibly provide a new venue for the Championships

JB is aware of other Development Groups looking at further equipment-related proposals e.g. Karate looking to purchase body armour to enable students to participate in SSS and

BUCS competitions. JB advocated for the collaboration between institutions and development groups to consider the storage and practical delivery of any 'national' equipment purchasing

## **8. Operational Plan 22/23**

CP updated the Committee on the Operational Plan as it stands so far, with the caveat that the RAG ratings are conservative (some elements are just awaiting final numbers before moving from amber to green). Key points from this included:

- SSS Leagues - There are areas to be improved for future years (Shinty governance and Handball team withdrawal are two examples)
- Missing Events - Cheer and Climbing will be considered as higher priority sports for event delivery next season

Next year's Operational Plan is going to be developed in the coming weeks so all thoughts from the Competitions Committee will be appreciated

**Action: JB to compare Participation Numbers and Medal Tracker numbers to numbers from 21-22 in next meeting in final update**

**Action: CP will update Operational Plan with the final cost to SSS to deliver Centralised Fixtures**

## **9. Next Meeting and Topics**

Although the meeting has already been moved, an alternative date will be required for the final meeting of the year due to a clash in diaries.

**Action: JB to ask for poll responses on Basecamp to establish next meeting date**

Topics will include New Event Proposals, National Squad Proposals, Data Analysis and Operational Plan considerations. This meeting will not be in-person due to new job for EL

## **10. AOB**

### **a. Playwaze Updates**

JB is aware that Playwaze will shortly be making changes to the layout of the form required for participants to enter events on the system. The goal is to understand these changes as soon as possible, to then provide training/update resources to the members ahead of the 23-24 season

### **b. Terms on the Group**

The Sports Chair and Sabb roles on the group will conclude at the end of this season (Sabbbs will have the opportunity to re-stand should they be staying on as Sabbbs in to 23-24). All other members of the group have at least one other year on the Committee

### **c. Exec Governance review**

EL requests the oversight of CP and JB on the document Exec have sent to all Committees as they undertake a review of all the group involved in SSS Governance

**Action: CP and JB to look at the document Exec have sent for us to review to see if anything needs to change for the next year. Document will be updated to Basecamp too**

## **Actions:**

- IL to send JB the Orienteering entry numbers
- CP and PP to talk to the Fixtures Forum to establish member opinions on the change in BUCS fixture administration before next Fixtures Forum
- CP to reach out to members about Centralised League Model delivery

- CP to evaluate and improve communication re. National Squad finances between players, SUs and Volunteer Staff
- JB to compare Participation Numbers and Medal Tracker numbers to numbers from 21-22 in next meeting in final update
- CP will update Operational Plan with the final cost to SSS to deliver Centralised Fixtures
- JB to ask for poll responses on Basecamp to determine next meeting date
- CP and JB to look at the document Exec have sent for us to review to see if anything needs to change for the next year. Document will be updated to Basecamp too