



## **SSS Competitions Committee Meeting (88)**

**9<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

**1000-1300**

### **MINUTES**

#### **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
- Murray Bushell (Sabbatical Officer Representative, Stirling Sabb) - MB
- Joel Adebanjo (Sabbatical Officer Representative, RGU Sabb) - JA
- Johnathan Macleod (Staff Representative, UWS Staff) - JM
- Eilidh Paterson (SSS Inclusion and Culture Coordinator) – EP

#### **Apologies:**

- Gregor Malcolm (Sports Chair Representative, Cross Country Chair) - GM

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

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

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

- Membership Audit – Request that everyone completes that as soon as possible
- Boccia Special P Application – 8 Institutions have now received kits (8 were budgeted for) and will be put on a leadership course. Working with SDS on this. Stirling, Heriot Watt, City of Glasgow, Perth (HISA), UWS, Napier, Aberdeen and Edinburgh
- LGBTQI History Month and Football v Homophobia – 6 clubs signed up so far. Angus from Heriot Watt (Student Rep) and a University of Edinburgh student are getting on camera to celebrate this project. Lots of momentum after the World Cup
- Active Campus for Colleges – Jo Foster (SSS Learning and People Coordinator), Megan Richardson (SSS Sport and Active Health Coordinator) and Stew Fowlie (Chief Operating Officer) met with sportscotland to discuss getting 12 staff members upskilled and in to Colleges to develop in colleges

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

- PP updated the Committee to say that there was a discussion around fixture prioritisation at the December Fixtures Forum which has helped in the build-up to the various deadlines coming up
- CP suggested that it may be worth seeing if we can move the February Competitions Committee Meeting to a different date due to this being the height of delivery season

c. SSS Chairs

- GM unable to attend
- SSS are recruiting for a [Rugby Chair](#) and would like to fill the roles of Golf Chair and Climbing Chair this year

d. Sabbatical Forum

- MB updated the group to say the next Sabb Forum will be on 10<sup>th</sup> February
- At the last meeting they had the Young People's Sport Panel present and stimulate conversation around how we can improve the engagement with wider groups like that
- Involvement in post-grads and engagement with elections have been main topics of conversations at recent forums
- Basecamp is an issue with Captains missing things. Advice from JB is to ask the clubs if they have accessed it and to contact the Sports Chair or SSS Sports Lead if they have any issues
- Smaller universities, e.g. QMU, are struggling to enter BUCS teams due to not knowing the numbers in advance. This is an ongoing challenge and difficult to solve due to BUCS entry timelines

**3. New Sport Proposal: Orienteering**

- Supporting papers for this proposal were sent out in advance
- Orienteering was involved with SSS a few years ago (likely when SSS was SUS)
- Sport would like to return to the SSS family
- Proposing a piggyback event for us to be involved with
- Two notes of support (Aberdeen and Edinburgh) and 4 student clubs overall (also includes Glasgow and Stirling)
- Sports Chair and Development Group discussions will be considered – a Chair would be needed
- SSS medals - To be discussed as to whether Scottish Orienteering would like to feature SSS medals e.g. if they would purchase SSS medals or if SSS would provide medals for this specific event
- The move to work with SSS will allow the college students to participate in this event too
- Stirling feel that their club is doing well and are very keen to get involved
- Edinburgh's club is well-established (hosting BUCS Orienteering this year) so very supportive

**Action: EP to ask for participation numbers of former Orienteering events**

**Decision: Orienteering is agreed by Competitions Committee to be a new SSS Sport**

**4. SSS Competitions Overview**

a. BUCS Competitions Group Update

- BUCS Comps will be meeting at end of February
- Some internal conversations between SSS and BUCS e.g. to advocate for improved experience for Scottish institutions in their events e.g. Handball Championships date/venue decisions
- CP asked the Committee for their thoughts on what he should raise at the next BUCS Comps meeting:
  - Team Lines – Ongoing issue with BUCSPlay team lines for matches which have been rearranged as the system locks the fixture and players can't then be added unless a specific email is sent to BUCSPlay Support (time-consuming). Edinburgh and Glasgow have had issues with this

- Fixture clashes – In a situation where it is difficult to fit in the matches for Cups as well as Leagues. Have been advocating for playing matches in training times if standard playing days are full (e.g. weekends). RGU particularly struggling (raised by JA)
- Point Deductions – Not having enough players in their BUCSPlay squads has triggered point deductions. Deadline for this was set to second week of fixtures (October), however many of the Leagues in Scotland didn't start until November (especially Centralised Fixtures) so this is too short notice. Has affected 12 teams for Edinburgh alone so far

**Action: CP to speak to JA to see if SSS can support match arrangements to help get matches played**

**Action: PP to reach out to contacts in institutions down south to ask if the same fixture issues are being faced down there as well as we're finding in Scotland**

**Action: CP and Sean to work with BUCS to adjust the point deduction approach to suit the Centralised League model used in Scotland**

b. Brief Finance Update

- CP shared the current financial standings of the Competitions Budget to the Committee
- Items highlighted in red have made a loss so far
- CP noted that multiple items of expenditure are still to be paid (e.g. venue costs, officials expenses, live-streaming) so some sports are looking healthy but they are not yet at the stage of having all their outgoings balanced out
- CP highlighted that there are some sports which will run at a deficit, e.g. Table Tennis (due to Centralised Fixtures programme), but that is a manageable loss
- Question from EL – Rebate money arranged by Development Groups and SSS Staff with SGBs is not currently reflected in the budget lines stated on the budget sheets provided by CP. CP agreed and said that is due to the different budget lines used by SSS: Development and Competitions. This can be amended for the end of year budgets by CP

**Action: CP to update the budget update provided to Competitions Committee to display the balance between Competitions and Development income (e.g. SGB rebate money)**

c. General SSS Rules and Regulations (appeals and trans inclusion)

- General Rules and Regs
  - CP and JB are working to update our overall rules and regulations to ensure clarity around appeals, specifically for knockout events
  - Competitions Committee will be asked to approve these updated rules and regulations in due course
- Trans Inclusion
  - SSS (specifically EP) are working with SGBs and wider partners to navigate the sensitive issue of trans-inclusion whilst also ensuring students get the opportunity to compete, no matter who they are
  - NUS Scotland - JA updated the group to say that NUS raised the question of: "What happens if someone wants to participate?" Would be useful to have guidance on how to approach inclusion in this way. EP thanked JA for raising this and will take the action to speak to NUS and other similar student bodies to update them on our work too – approaches in 'general society' and 'sport' differ so it's important to recognise that but also work together

- EP updated the group to say that the SSS line is to allow people to participate as best we can and working with SGBs and Leap Sports e.g. SRU banning trans-women unless they transitioned before 12 year olds creates a barrier. There are thoughts on how a Touch Rugby Tournament may be brought in to help people to participate and to generate an argument for the possible adjustment, for example
- JM sought clarity on the recent basketball example raised recently e. the inclusion of a trans-women in the SSS College National Finals. The conclusion from that discussion is that the student will be able to compete as it is a SSS event, therefore the decision is ours to make. If the event was organised by basketballscotland, for reference, they would have taken the situation on a case-by-case basis

**Action: EP to feedback to Development Group that New Event Proposals for increasing the inclusion of our programme to be brought to the June Competitions Committee Meeting (deadline end of April as per New Event Policy)**

## 5. Events

### a. Completion rate

- JB updated the group to say that 61 out of 75 potential events have been completed so far, with a few pending rearrangement (e.g. 3v3 Basketball, Polo League Match)
- Significant changes to make the Committee aware of include:
  - Squash was not part of the SSGames this year due to a significant number of clashes in the squash calendar (particularly BUCS Premier League matches). It has been decided that Squash will not feature as part of the SSGames in future, to prevent this clash, and will be held in March instead
  - Boxing, Cheer and Climbing will not have a competition this year due to a variety of reasons, however there are plans to host a Boxing Sparring Day to help get the students together in a different way
- We are hosting a Karate Champs for the first time in 3-4 years on Sunday. The plan is to bring it back this year to ensure the students are aware of it next year and have it embedded in their diary, though this may be at risk of making a small loss

### b. Participation numbers

- Due to the delivery season being up and running, there hasn't been time to update the numbers this semester so far, however Sean updated the numbers up until the end of Semester 2, so JB fed back on those numbers
- Semester 1 is missing some data e.g. our piggyback Cross Country events and some League fixtures (e.g. Archery), but we had 2801 in total (1641 men, 1137 women and 23 who identify another way)
- We have broken entry records for a number of events since last the last Competitions Committee meeting, notably ones part of the SSGames (Table Tennis, Fencing Beginners, Wheelchair Basketball and Judo)

### c. Event feedback

- We have had 83 responses so far in this academic year, so slightly fewer than we would like. Gaining responses is an ongoing battle
- We are still above 4/5 for most aside from 'Non-Competition Environment'. JB will look in to in order to establish the reason for this – it may be one particular venue used that cause the drop

- It is worth noting that most responses came from Trampoline as JB personally asked clubs to complete the form while they waited to get their medals. This personal approach clearly seemed to work

d. Intern

- SSS will be bringing in a new Competition Intern via the connection to university of Edinburgh's Sport and Recreational Management academic department
- The intern will support in the delivery of the Conference Finals in particular

## 6. Fixtures

a. Percentage completion update

- CP updated the Fixture Completion rate document on feedback from the last Competitions Committee Meeting to identify how many matches should have been played, in order to provide context. JM agreed that this is an improved format for presenting the current status of BUCS fixture completion
- CP confident that most fixtures will be played but highlighted a few of concern:
  - Baseball – Stirling and Aberdeen have teams involved so can check in with them
  - Fencing – One fixture outstanding from Centralised model but not a concern
  - Golf – Affected by weather but not unheard of
  - Tennis – Women's Tier 3 'Fast Four' league is concerning at the moment but Sean may be able to help gain context on this as he is involved in tennis as his own sport
- SSS Leagues
  - CP noted that some of the league deadlines have been extended to April in order to facilitate other fixtures, e.g. BUCS water polo fixtures, based on feedback from last year
- SC raised the fact there are a lot of back-to-back fixtures due to the 'free weeks' being taken up by other fixtures. JM suggested that 'free weeks' are saved for Semester 2 rather than Semester 1 as it wasn't as helpful in Semester 1 as it would be in Semester 2. JA agreed that it is a challenge when the notification of Cup fixtures come only a week in advance, when League fixtures have already been put in place

b. Centralised updates

- CP mentioned a special note to thank Sean for his work on the Centralised Fixture
- Update from Sean via CP:
  - Fencing – One fixture to go
  - Futsal – All Women's completed, with Men's fixtures taking place on 19<sup>th</sup> February and 16<sup>th</sup> March
  - Squash – Completed
  - Table Tennis – Completed
  - Ultimate – Women's now completed. Men's Tier 1 to be arranged by clubs and Men's Tier 2 will be concluding on 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> March
- CP reflected that we have reduced the deficit created by Centralised Fixtures (a goal from last year's) programme, with only two sports which may come in with a small deficit again this year e.g. Futsal
- Futsal remains a sport which has a continuing discrepancy between the desires of the Fixture Administrators, the players and SSS e.g. centralised vs weekly, match court vs smaller court and overall costs. CP will set up an opportunity to review Futsal League delivery to enhance the programme for next year e.g. hosting two centralised league fixture weekends and asking others to be arranged between the Fixture Administrators (like other sports)

- JM suggested asking the Fixture Admins how many of the institutions will continue to enter the leagues if this will put more workload on the Fixture Administrators
- SC agreed that the National League set-up (mix of some weekends and some weekly) would be a good compromise
- General discussion around the ability to fit in additional weekend fixtures overall

**Action: CP to instigate a Futsal League Model review ahead of the 22-23 season**

## **7. National Squads**

- CP updated the committee to say that Sean will be taking over the National Squad programme administration and handovers are underway
- National Squads are underway:
  - Cross Country – Completed and went well
  - Basketball – Coaching staff are in place and Team Managers are now being recruited. Trials have been undertaken and the training squads have been selected. Home and Away kit will be ordered
    - Men have been invited to England to play against the English Universities team at end of April
    - JM has been asking if a Women's opportunity could be included as well
    - England Universities could be interested in an additional fixtures too
  - Cricket – Head Coach stepped down this year so we are recruiting for their replacement. Standard MCC and Cambridge matches are in place for the season
  - Netball – Coaching staff and Team Managers have been recruited. Fixtures are now to be arranged in order to set up the Trial and Training programme
  - Sailing – Need more details on what the plans are this year
  - Volleyball – Coaching staff and Team Managers have been recruited. Trials are underway for Women and training squads have been selected for the Men. Additional tournament has been brought in to the programme this year and will be used to support an Umpire Course from SVA as well
- CP speaking to Barry Squires (English Universities Sport) to discuss future competitive opportunities. Investigating the opportunity to compete in June alongside the SSS Conference
- Sports Union membership is needed for all National Squad players in order to be covered by relevant insurance. Training will be developed next year for the Team Managers and Head Coaches in order to reinforce this message (which is on the nomination forms), but in the meantime we need to ensure no players fall through the net. A positive of this policy is that it may identify players which may not have come to light otherwise

**Action: JM and EL to contact Sean with the potential plans to have competition against England Universities in order to confirm programme as far as possible**

## **8. Special Projects**

- EL asked the Committee for any ideas SSS could apply to our competitions in order to submit an application
- SC and JA have been talking to discuss how to do a 'Sport for All' week and want to have a Wheelchair Basketball section – possibly a 'showcase' – in order to keep up the interest levels
  - Napier got in touch via Tina Gordon (Inclusion Manager, basketballscotland) to ask if they could apply for funding to buy chairs. JB

sent the Special Projects information over and this will require a check-in by the Basketball Development Group (EL)

- Additional project ideas may be coming from Fencing (boxes), Futsal (scoreboards) and Volleyball (National squad volleyballs). The Sports Chair Leads will be empowered to check in with their sports in order to ensure any potential ideas are worked through
- Spectator experience is a particular focus EL would like the Committee to look at re. Special Project money spending
- Sustainability is a key focus for all to consider within Special Project funding applications

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

- CP updated the Committee with the Operational Plan as it stands in February
- Most areas are underway and there will be success in most, with only a few factors which may not be achieved (e.g. certain events not happening like Climbing and Cheer Championships)
- Completed actions include:
  - Adding Wheelchair Basketball to the Scottish Student Games
  - Event Calendar promotion
  - National Squad programme baseline established
- EL thanked the SSS staff for their update on this

#### **10. Next Meeting and Topics**

- 6<sup>th</sup> April at 10am

#### **11. AOB**

- GM asked (through JB) whether any of the future meetings will be hosted in-person

**Action: EL will do a poll on Basecamp to see if anyone is happy to do an in-person meeting out of the next two meetings**

#### **12. Actions**

- EP to ask for participation numbers of former Orienteering events so we can provide that to back-up the proposal
- EP to feedback to Development Group that New Event Proposals for increasing the inclusion of our programme to be brought to the June Competitions Committee Meeting (deadline end of April as per New Event Policy) e.g. Touch Rugby
- PP to reach out to contacts in institutions down south to ask if the same fixture issues are being faced down there as well as we're finding in Scotland
- CP to speak to JA to see if SSS can support match arrangements to help get matches played
- CP and Competitions Assistant (Sean) to work with BUCS to adjust the point deduction approach to suit the Centralised League model used in Scotland
- CP to update the budget update provided to Competitions Committee to display the balance between Competitions and Development income (e.g. SGB rebate money)
- CP to instigate a Futsal League Model review ahead of the 22-23 season
- JM and EL to contact Sean with the potential plans to have competition against England Universities in order to confirm programme as far as possible
- EL will do a poll on Basecamp to see if anyone is happy to do an in-person meeting out of the next two meetings

#### **13. Decisions**

- **Orienteering is agreed by Competitions Committee to be a new SSS Sport**