



SSS Competitions Committee Meeting (80)

15th July 2021

1000-1200

MINUTES

Present

Chris Sellar (CS)
Eamonn Laird (EL)
Ollie Cruickshank (OC)
Johnathan MacLeod (JM)
Emily Divine (ED)
Aaron Johnson (AJ)
Chris Purdie – SSS (CP)
Jess Barrows – SSS (JB)

Apologies

Iain Christie (IC)

1. Welcome and Apologies

CS welcomed the group to the first 21-22 Competitions Committee Meeting. IC was unable to attend.

2. Introductions and Quiz

CS explained the role of Competitions Committee for the new members of the group, stating that the group:

- Generates, monitors and reviews feedback from the membership
- Acts as a sounding board for SSS Comps Staff for new ideas
- Identifies areas for development of SSS Comps
- Makes strategic decisions which impact on SSS Comps work e.g. New Events or New Sport proposals
- Actively supports SSS Comps Staff

As Chair, CS expects group members to:

- Read all supporting documents before the meeting (should be released one week in advance)
- Engage actively in meetings – asking questions and providing opinions
- Maintain an objective and neutral hat in meetings, to provide opinions on behalf of the membership, not just from your own institutional or volunteer role
- Be a strong advocate for SSS (and especially SSS Comps) overall – you represent SSS Comps when you aren't in meetings

3. SSS Competitions, Events and National Squad Overview

- CP reiterated to the group that the content brought to them is open to feedback and opinions at all times
- To assist the new members' in their understanding of the group, CP will meet with each one individually. This excludes OC who has considerable experience in the sector

Action: CP to arrange a catch-up with all new Comps Committee Members (minus OC)

a. Event Overview

i. Calendar

- SSS are working with member institutions who have their own sports facilities on an Event Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which details the space SSS are requesting for their events this year. This allows SSS to share the events around the sector and not overwhelm any one facility, whilst also keeping event costs low for students via an agreed free/discounted booking rate. There are a few MOUs still to be signed and returned, but CP is working on that
- Glasgow and Aberdeen are two institutions in ongoing discussions around their facility space and therefore are unlikely to be able to support any SSS events. Glasgow, in particular, has been hit by Glasgow Life's own struggles as they usually outsource their training/match venues to Glasgow Life
- Where interest remains SSS are looking to repeat any virtual competition formats brought in last year

ii. Adjustments

- SSS are working towards as 'normal' a calendar as possible, with the awareness that semester 1 may be a little different for sports which need time before competition can begin in full force once more (i.e. indoor sports)

iii. Strategy Changes

- Pending funding from Scottish Funding Council, SSS staffing will change this year from a Regional to a Project-based structure. Providing space for staff to work on specific areas of work will open up additional delivery support for SSS Competitions, especially those competitions at the lower tiers

iv. First Aid

- SSS are in the process of a First Aid Tender, seeking a new 'preferred First Aid supplier' for the programme between 21-22 and 23-24 seasons (should both parties wish to remain in the agreement beyond two years. This will help professionalise the delivery of competitions
- JB and CP thank JM for his support on this Tender as part of the interview panel

b. National Squads

- SSS are working on a review of the National Squad programme and overall approach, specifically the key variables deemed vital for a programme to run
- CP is leading on this project and will be delivering a more full proposal to the Competitions Committee at the next meeting (August) – plenty of time ahead of when they will take place (traditionally Semester 2)
- Consultation with Chairs and the Members will be embedded in to the timeline for this review. For Chairs, specifically the role of Team Managers and the expectations placed on that volunteer
- This review will create space for sports who have not previously had a National Squad to propose a reason for inclusion, whilst also talking to the sports who have traditionally had squads. However, SSS are prepared for this to be a reduced calendar in 21-22 to ensure the programmes provided are of good quality

Action: CP to create National Squad documentation for next meeting

- c. BUCS and SSS Leagues
 - Leah Davidson (Development and Competitions Assistant) is now working on the fixture dates for the BUCS Leagues now Team Entries have closed
 - 572 teams from 19 institutions are set to compete (down from 592 in 19/20)
 - 4 new sports will be introduced into the BUCS League programme (Open Dodgeball, Men's' and Women's Baseball, Open Softball and Mixed Wheelchair Basketball), however Scotland only has 3 teams involved in these (3 teams in Baseball League from Stirling and Aberdeen)
 - For clarity 'Mixed' = both men and women allowed on each team whereas 'Open = Anybody can enter
 - The Committee are interested in how BUCS will evaluate the impact and sustainability of these sports

Action: CP to send Comps Committee the review criteria BUCS will use to evaluate the impact of the 4 new sports and their events

- The Committee recognise that these new BUCS sports will need support to get up and running so will advocate for these in the membership. These sports have potential on the participation/recreational side of the new strategy so Scottish support would be beneficial
- Wheelchair Basketball should be the sport most targeted in Committee advocacy as it is a SSS sport which staff hope to hold a competition for in the coming season (possibly alongside the SS Games), but needs more people to show interest

4. Playwaze Update

- SSS has now ended its contract with Azolve and working towards a release of Playwaze in August
- Testing is well underway, though still lots to do
- OC and IC will be asked for their support on testing when the time comes
- Training sessions are in the diary to train: Fixture Admins and Sabbs (11th August), SSS Staff (24th August), Sports Chairs (18th August) and Captains (24th August)
- The new system should be of great benefit to Comps, providing a stronger platform to access data

5. New Sports/Event Policy and Proposals

a. New Policy

- JB explained that the current 'New Sport Policy', used to support decisions on whether a sport is viable to come under the SSS umbrella, has been adapted to provide greater clarity on the process to be followed when proposing a new Event to the SSS Comps calendar
- Adding new events to the calendar has an element of risk attached to it as it an additional event requiring staff resource, whilst also being another opportunity for financial risk if it doesn't stick to budget
- The main changes made indicate the details needed in a policy, provide a structure to follow and, most importantly, indicate that proposals should be finalised in April ready for Comps Committee to approve in May. This deadline allows the SSS Staff team to support event planning over the summer months in

enough time to bring in the new competition come Semester 1 the following year

- The newly adapted 'New Sport and New Event Policy' was released in advance of the meeting and the Committee unanimously agreed that it is ready for use in the 21-22 season onwards

Decision: The Competitions Committee approved the 'New Sport and New Event Policy'

b. Basketball 3x3 Event Proposal

- In advance of the meeting, the Committee were provided a proposal and supporting budget for a new event put forward by the SS Basketball Development Group
- The Committee thanked the group for their hard work, good layout of the proposal and also for the good idea overall. It fills a gap for a fun competition which supports the development of inexperienced players
- As EL is the SS Basketball Chair, he fielded a number of questions from the Committee on behalf of the SS Basketball Group. JM, the SS Basketball Communications Officer, also helped to provide the following answers:
 - o The Teams will be of mixed ability, rather than focusing on BUCS team levels
 - o SGB staff are invested in the idea and will support the on-the-day delivery
 - o SSS Staff will be able to support this event as a Tier 2
 - o Students will need to be members of their Sports Union in order to be covered by insurance
 - o Non-member institutions who may wish to take part (e.g. Colleges) may still be allowed to participate, though a 'Guest' option may be required for this. CP explained SSS are looking in to flexible membership options for Colleges and other non-member institutions so this is an ongoing discussion

Action: CP to update the Comps Committee with SSS plans for membership fees at next meeting

- o SGB rebate should help keep the costs down for student teams by covering referee fees. This rebate is a 'kickback' from student memberships/affiliations to Basketball Scotland
- o The budget is balanced on 16 institutions being interested (14 universities and 2 colleges) but the group recognised that 28 entries may be unrealistic, especially post-pandemic, so this may need to be adjusted
- o A social element could be added to this event, however SSS would ask the club closes to the host venue to take charge of that and not, in any way, ask SSS to include this in the event budget

Decision: The Committee approved the SS Basketball 3x3 Festival proposal

c. Basketball Knockout Trophy Proposal

- In advance of the meeting, the Committee were provided a proposal and supporting budget for a new event put forward by the SS Basketball Development Group
- Again, EL and JM answered questions from the Committee, as recorded in the following Q&A:
 - o Semester 1 Timeline

Question: Is it too tight a timeframe to fit all fixtures in to Semester 1?

Answer: There are a number of Finals which take place in Semester 2 which would take priority for the student teams. Keeping the event in Semester 1 would give the higher level teams a chance to participate (this is a performance-focused event, rather than recreational).

Additionally, this timeframe allows exchange/ERASMUS students the opportunity to participate in a complete competition, rather than supporting a team's progression through a knockout (e.g. Conference Cup) but leaving before the conclusion

- Fixtures During Training Sessions

Question: Some clubs train on half courts or courts which are not up to BUCS regulation size for matches. Would the competition allow for non-BUCS regulation courts to be used? Most institutions are unlikely to bump the training of other clubs out of their halls to allow for this competition – especially in the immediate return this year

Answer: Yes, the clubs and referees will be notified that some of the courts will not be BUCS-regulation size. Clubs will be asked to do their best to provide as spacious and safe spaces for matches as possible

- Match Scheduling

Question: Providing the teams are in place and in agreement, are the matches allowed to be played earlier than the weeks stated on the draw? This may help get all matches played

Answer: Yes, this will be allowed. The sector are asked to remember that the staggered approach to academic timelines (some institutions return later than others) will be factored in to the draw so there is a limit on how early all matches can be played.

Additionally, the draw will enable those geographically closest to play first to assist with transport logistics

- Finals Date

Question: The Finals Date will need to be considered alongside other finals and leagues which the players may be participating in – which especially impacts the professional players in the sector, as well as officials' availability

Answer: Yes, that is under consideration – though there is an awareness that the venue able to be sourced for the event may be the largest influencer on the date. As this event has been approved after the SSS MOUs were sent, there is a chance the event will need to be held externally.

- Format Suggestion: Full Weekend Event

Question: Would it be easier to fit in all matches over a weekend rather than a prolonged knockout over a few months?

Answer: It would go against the essence of the reason this event has been created – which aims to pit the best Scottish student teams against each other and find the Scottish Champion. The alternative event proposed to the SSS Competitions

Committee (3v3 Festival) is recreational and therefore the full-weekend approach is appropriate. The Knockout Trophy wishes to retain its more 'performance' focus. Additionally there would be many more matches to be played meaning the cost of this event would significantly increase. For example, a hall would need to be hired for longer, more officials would be required etc.

Decision: SSS Competitions Committee provide provisional approval to this event, on the understanding that approval from the Fixtures Forum is required for complete sign-off. The opinion of the Fixtures Forum is to be sought by Friday 30th July.

Action: JB to add the Comps Committee Q&A to the BBall Trophy Proposal and send to EL

Action: OC to ask Fixtures Forum for opinion on Bball Trophy Proposal, which has Comps Committee initial support, with emphasis on the timing of fixtures

d. Fencing Shield Proposal

- In advance of the meeting, the Committee were provided a proposal and supporting budget for a new event put forward by the SS Fencing Chair
- JB answered questions from the Committee on the proposal:
 - o The event will span two semesters
 - o The Final will be held at the same venue as the Beginners' Championships as an 'exhibition event'
 - o Competing during training sessions shouldn't be a problem as a piste is no larger than a badminton court and the teams could play up to 3 matches in a day
 - o The entry fee proposed (£45) is the fee for all teams (student-only, no community club teams)

Decision: The Committee approved the SS Fencing Shield proposal

e. Fencing Training Days Proposal

- In advance of the meeting, the Committee were provided a proposal and supporting budget for a new event put forward by the SS Fencing Chair
- JB answered questions from the Committee on the proposal:
 - o This will be providing weapon-specific training, ideally at venues across Scotland (some regions are stronger in certain weapons)
 - o SGB support has been sought and provisionally provided – in terms of coach access/contact and possibly discounted equipment hire fees
 - o The venue hire quotes provided in the budget were from November 2020, therefore they will need to be updated
 - o The Committee's idea to host all three in one venue on the same day would be a reasonable Plan B, if required

Decision: SSS Competitions Committee provide approval to this event, on the understanding that the budget will be reviewed regarding venue hire fees

6. Operational Plan 21/22

- Due to time constraints, the Committee are asked to feedback on the Ops Plan via Basecamp no later than 13th August

7. Next Meeting and Topics

- a. Next 26th August – Will be 3 hours long (as will all in future). Will cover items such as: Risk Register for Events, Leagues and National Squads
- b. Annual calendar of dates: 26th August, 4th Nov, 10th Feb, 31st March and 26th May

Action: JB to send out calendar invitations for all future Competitions Committee Meetings

8. AOB

a. Netball Scotland Proposal

- Netball Scotland have approached CP to ask if the BUCS Tier 1A teams would be happy to move their fixtures to Wednesdays from Saturdays in order to make space on Saturdays for their National Squad development programme (which could benefit the SS Netball National squad pathway)
- The Committee proposed some supportive comments towards this move:
 - o UWS don't have their own facilities so this wouldn't impact heavily on them
 - o This would allow East-based teams to get more out of the CENA leagues
- Ultimately, this decision needs to come from the members via the Fixtures Forum

Action: CP and Netball Scotland to create proposal for moving 1A netball fixtures to Wednesdays to support National Squad pathway development at weekends

Action: OC to take Netball Proposal to Fixtures Forum for opinions

9. Actions:

- CP to send Comps Committee the review criteria BUCS will use to evaluate the impact of the 4 new sports and their events
- CP to update the Comps Committee with SSS plans for membership fees – especially for colleges who are uncertain
- CP to create National Squad documentation for next meeting
- CP to arrange a catch-up with all new Comps Committee Members (minus OC – who has enough experience behind him)
- JB to add the Comps Committee Q&A to the BBall Trophy Proposal and send to EL
- OC to ask Fixtures Forum for opinion on Bball Trophy Proposal, which has Comps Committee initial support, with emphasis on the timing of fixtures
- JB to send out calendar invitations for all future Competitions Committee Meetings (done)
- CP and Netball Scotland to create proposal for moving 1A netball fixtures to Wednesdays to support National Squad pathway development at weekends
- OC to take Netball Proposal to Fixtures Forum for opinions