



**SSS Competitions Committee Meeting (82)
4th November 2021
1000-1300**

MINUTES

Present

Chris Sellar (CS)
Eamonn Laird (EL)
Iain Christie (IC)
Aaron Johnson (AJ)
Chris Purdie – SSS (CP)
Jess Barrows – SSS (JB)
Ian Lowe – SSS (IL) – for first half only

Apologies

Johnathan MacLeod (JM)
Emily Divine (ED)
Ollie Cruickshank (OC)

1. Welcome and Apologies

CS welcomed the group and expressed that the meeting will contain a lot of interesting discussion.

2. Standing Item – SSS Groups Update

a. SSS Development Committee

IL updated the group with key headlines:

- Claire Scott has stepped down as the Chair of the SSS Development Committee due to work commitments so recruitment will begin soon for that position. This is an opportunity to consider the structure of the Committee as a whole
- Operational Plan is underway, with lots of tasks changing from amber to green
- Learning and Development:
 - Coaching Network is underway though Basecamp not quite working as the place for content sharing yet
 - Sabb Forum is working well
 - Leadership Programme is 4 sessions in and going strong
 - Festive Gathering is nearly finalised but Olympians will be involved which is exciting news
 - Refin Brilliant discussions are underway with a few courses having been competed already
- Equality and Inclusion:
 - Women and Girls in Sport Week content was well received on the most part, with some backlash being received regarding the inclusion of trans-women in the content indicating work still to be done in the sector
 - Equality Group Chair recruitment is in its final stages
 - Equality Forum planning is underway to create an intersectional platform for discussion
 - Playwaze Equality Data Gathering has provided useful information to begin analysing our participants and a survey is being generated to capture those outside our competition participants e.g. gym-goers

- Active Health
 - Mental Health Courses are being advertised and Megan will soon be training as a deliverer so she can support members (many now have Wellbeing Officers on club committees, due to SGB requests)
 - An Active Health Steering Group is being considered
 - Daily Mile conversation is ongoing as Scotland aims to become a 'Daily Mile Nation'

b. SSS Fixtures Forum

In the absence of OC, CP provided an update on the key headlines facing the Fixture Administrators at the moment:

- Transport/COP 26
 - Many members have been impacted by the fleets of vehicles being sent to support COP 26 which is making transport to away games difficult, especially for Aberdeen-based institutions
- COVID
 - Members are all reacting to COVID cases and precautions differently, with CP providing a lot of support on this
- Centralised Fixtures
 - This year has seen considerable teams being added or withdrawn at short notice which has heavily impacted the organisation of centralised fixtures and the costs incurred
 - The Working Group will be up and running soon to help establish a sustainable plan for centralised fixtures. Until then, the patience of members is appreciated

Overall, despite these challenges, SSS are advocating for as many games to be played as possible, with flexibility from the membership as far as possible. As per previous years, if there is a backlog of fixtures to be played, BUCS competition will take precedent to reduce the number of fines incurred by the membership.

The next Fixtures Forum will be held on 15th December. Discussion regarding the agenda concluded that it would be beneficial for the Fixture Administrators to decide upon a consistent approach to the weekly fixture arrangement email which is standard practice by BUCS.

Action: SSS to add 'Weekly Fixture Arrangement Email' as a discussion point on Fixtures Forum agenda

c. SSS Chairs

AJ updated the group with key points regarding the Chairs:

- Centralised Fixtures – As per the above point, Centralised Fixtures are worth discussing further as a Committee as there are a few sports who may have now 'outgrown' the centralised model and be ready to sustain a Home and Away model, according to feedback from the Chairs. Other concerns raised were sport-specific and can be continued offline
- Internal Chair Communication – This year has seen reduced communication between the Chairs internally than last year. This may be due to increased activity levels due to the relaxation of restrictions, but Basecamp can still be used as a place to encourage discussion
- Event Feedback Survey – The Cycling Development Group have made a suggestion to amend the order of the feedback survey questions to move the email address later in the survey to provide a feeling of anonymity and, hopefully, increase the number of responses received. JB will action this

Action: JB to adjust feedback survey question order with feedback from Cycling Group

JB updated the group on two further areas regarding Chairs:

- Festive Catch-Up – This year the Chairs will be asked to join a check-in during mid-January to help kick-start the new semester. The date for this will be arranged via doodle poll
- Vacancies – Sports which don't yet have a Chair are: Aquatics, Badminton, Climbing, Golf, Hockey and Rugby. Progress has been made on Aquatics and Badminton, with the other roles requiring a bit more thought before being released for applications. AJ suggested that he could support climbing a little, if needed, which JB noted

The Committee asked how well attended Captains Meetings are and IL was able to share the latest version of the Tracker SSS are using to keep an eye on meeting attendance alongside other engagement with SSS Activity. The Committee asked if IL could consider a gender breakdown for the Captains Meeting tracker to understand if the Men's and Women's side of each club are being well represented

Action: IL to consider if a gender breakdown in the Captains Meeting Tracker would be possible

d. BUCS Competitions

IC kindly attended the latest BUCS Comps Committee in place of CP who was delivering a Golf event. Thanks to IC for helping in this scenario. The key headlines from that meeting were:

- Increasing participation in certain sports is a specific goal for BUCS, particularly para sports
- The weekly emails from BUCS provide more detail on upcoming events and activities to be aware of, which all Committee members are encouraged to sign up to if not already

Future BUCS Meetings will likely revolve around how best to support Fixture Administrators as they try to get matches played and avoid fines. BUCS may consider relaxing some fines if there is considerable evidence for its requirement

3. Actions Check from Last Meeting

All actions from the previous meeting have been started or completed.

JB provided an update to the Committee on Futsal to say that SSS has been able to secure funding from SFA which will be split between Football and Futsal. This funding will support the securing of an external venue for the Women's Futsal event which was approved by the Committee, whilst also providing the funds required to cover media coverage and wider promotion of the sport. Finding a venue at this short notice may be difficult, by JB will work with the group on this.

4. SSS Events Update

CP provided an update to the Committee to provide an overview of the events so far:

- Participation Numbers are, on average, higher than the equivalent event in 19-20 season (though it was noted that some data was missing from the 19-20 records). Well done to AJ and JB in particular for their work in getting 3 Cycling events done already
- Feedback Numbers – Survey responses are lower than preferred and the link is being shared as widely as possible. The Committee suggested that a prize is allocated to incentivise the survey. Overall, the responses indicate the students are satisfied with the events and no major issues have been reported
- Institutional Participation - All main universities have had representation at least one event with the exclusion of the Open University (a non-SSS member). Colleges have been involved in 3 of our events (Athletics, Basketball and Athletics) – with the scope for more as the Cross Country Championships is upcoming

- Financially – Most events have been breakeven so far, with Athletics and Archery in the red
- Guests/Non-Members – As of 31st October, students at institutions not affiliated to SSS will need to pay the Guest entry and not be eligible for medals. Not all SSS events have the capacity to accept Guest entries, so it is hoped the students will create a critical mass to request their institution joins SSS. Stew Fowlie (SSS Chief Operating Officer) is still happy to meet with institutions and discuss various membership options, if they are happy to meet with him

The Committee thanked the SSS Staff for their work in getting the Events organised with a short run-up.

Action: JB and CP to source a prize/prizes for the Feedback survey to incentivise responses

5. Playwaze Update

JB updated the Committee to say that there have been unforeseen challenges with Playwaze, most of them caused by the late release of the SSS Event section of the system which meant there was limited time to test it. Working through these challenges has taken up a lot of staff time.

Despite the challenges, the system has provided a few benefits over the previously used Azolve system:

- Chairs have eyesight on entry numbers
- Equality Data Gathering has drastically assisted the Development team
- Leagues and Tournaments have a professional looking 'flow' which is a far cry from the spreadsheets previously used

SSS are working hard to use the system and thank all members for their patience with the errors encountered. If a bug or problem is observed, it helps the staff if screenshots can be taken as this points the technicians in the right direction.

6. Working Calendar Update

JB updated the Committee with the following:

- 18 events have been completed in Semester 1 (includes externally run Cross Country Winter Series events)
- 3 events have so far had to be cancelled (Fencing Training Days – lack of interest; Volleyball 4v4 West – lack of interest; Trampoline – lack of venue)
- The calendar has retained some virtual options, e.g. Triathlon, Cycling and Karate
- Semester 2 is still being worked on, with Scottish Student Games being a considerable focus. The Games will look a bit different this year with events taking place across Edinburgh and Glasgow plus some of the sports have had to move away from the standard weekend due to clashes with higher scale events e.g. European Athletics event at Emirates
- Playwaze will soon give SSS access to a widget which will embed the calendar of events on to the system in a searchable way. This will be embedded in to the website. Until then, the website will contain only upcoming events due to JB's workload

After discussion with the Committee, JB will aim to have the website event calendar update by close of November to support the members in their planning. She will also release an updated Working Calendar at end of November to support with Semester 2 planning

Action: JB to update website and release updated Working Calendar to members by end of November

7. National Squads

CP will shortly get the Working Group for National Squads up and running, where a sustainable plan for SSS National Squads will be discussed. Thank you to EL, JM and ED for stepping forward for that group. Sailing and Cross Country are two sports which will have National Squads this year, the others are still TBC.

The Home Nations have been meeting to discuss the return of the Home Nations Tournament in 2023 which traditionally pitted the 4 nations against each other. BUCS have been presented to and require a further presentation before they consider any financial contribution towards the event, as per the timeline CP showed the Committee. The event is challenging to host due to its large scale and significant costs, so all parties wish to ensure the event is brought back in a sustainable manner. Ideally the event would be able to run every 2 years, though this is dependent on a number of factors.

The Committee thanked CP and the rest of the Home Nations for their hard work and recommended all scenarios are factored in before going back to BUCS, so their questions can be answered. Partnerships and sponsors may play a considerable part in this.

The Committee also suggested that the Home Nations consider approaching venues who may have the capacity to host to ask for their provisional support in order to scope the finances. CS suggested that Oriam may be interested in hosting the event, for example.

8. Centralised Fixtures

CP thanked OC, IC and AJ for stepping forward for this Group and reiterated what had previously been mentioned in the meeting to say that the key areas the group will work on will include:

- Specific sports' needs – Analysis on a case-by-case basis e.g. has a sport 'outgrown' a centralised model?
- Scoping costings across various formats
- Establishing a sustainable model for the membership, which limits expenditure for SSS

The Committee suggested that the group considers whether the membership are asked to play a larger part in the arrangement of centralised fixtures, as they are in England

9. New Event Proposal

The SS Netball Development Group have noticed a gap in the programme for recreational players and had received considerable interest from the student netball clubs regarding a recreational offer. The proposal circulated to the Committee outlined the one-day festival concept which has been proposed in alignment with Netball Scotland and which has a venue already booked in (St Andrews – outdoor courts).

The Committee thanked all involved in the creation of the proposal and suggested the group consider a contingency plan in case the weather cancels the event. Otherwise, the group approved the proposal.

Action: JB to notify Netball Development Group that their proposal was successful

10. Next Meeting and Topics

CS reminded the group that the next meeting is on 10th February 2022. The group agreed that the meeting should cover:

- Updates from the new workings groups
- COP26 impact update
- New SSS Strategy and how Comps will fit in

- Ops Plan check-in

11. AOB

Actions:

- **SSS to add 'Weekly Fixture Arrangement Email' as a discussion point on Fixtures Forum agenda**
- **JB to adjust feedback survey question order with feedback from Cycling Group**
- **IL to consider if a gender breakdown in the Captains Meeting Tracker would be possible**
- **JB and CP to source a prize/prizes for the Feedback survey to incentivise responses**
- **JB to update website and release updated Working Calendar to members by end of November**
- **CP to start working groups for Centralised Fixtures and National Squads**
- **JB to notify Netball Development Group that their proposal was successful**