

ENGLISH ICE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION COMPANY LIMITED
MEETING OF DIRECTORS 25TH NOVEMBER 2006

Minutes of meeting of EIHA Board on 25th November 2006 at the Marriott Courtyard Hotel, Slough at 10.30 a.m.

Present: Ken Taggart, Geoff Hemmerman, Rob Laidler, Neville Moralee, Irene Jones, Tony Oliver, Bob Wilkinson.

In attendance: Liz Moralee (minutes).

Apologies: None.

OPENING REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

KT thanked everyone for coming. He attended the IHUK meeting on 23rd November. This went very smoothly, and he was impressed with how well IHUK are working together. He has been invited to a discussion with Richard Caborn and representatives of other hockey organisations on 19th December. He has asked if this can be postponed until his next planned visit to the UK. The discussion has been called because the IHPA are unhappy about the governance of UK hockey, particularly insurance in the EIHL.

PROPOSAL TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE LAST BOARD MEETING
9TH SEPTEMBER 2006

The minutes of the Board meeting on 9th September 2006 were read and approved, proposed **IJ**, seconded **GH**.

MATTERS ARISING

None.

COMPANY BUSINESS – MISS JONES

A letter has come from someone at Whitley Bay who is very unhappy about zero tolerance. As this was only from a single individual, she has not replied.

John Armstrong has written to **RL** protesting about his son Jake Armstrong not being granted an appeal against his 12-month ban. The incident in question took place on 23rd September, but the appeal request was not posted until 28th October, as Solihull Barons were apparently unhelpful to the player. It had no video or other evidence included. **IJ** wrote saying she was not prepared to accept an appeal so long after the deadline. She wrote to Solihull Barons asking for their position, but they have not replied. **RL** now has another letter from John Armstrong waiting at the post office. The discipline document includes a limit of 7 working days. It is standard in employment for people to have a maximum of 7 – 10 days to appeal, so this length of time should be seen as reasonable. **IJ** is concerned that if Jake Armstrong is allowed to appeal, this will open the door to more appeals long after the event. **KT** pointed out that appeals may be allowed only with new evidence. Jake Armstrong is an adult and should be expected to take any action himself, so the EIHA are not obliged to reply to his father. It was decided that **IJ** should write saying Jake Armstrong missed his opportunity to appeal. There is no problem if he wishes to appeal to IHUK.

There are still a considerable number of teams which have not returned membership forms, including many in the women's leagues and some in the EPIHL. She will email the latest list to all the Board.

FINANCIAL REPORT – MR MORALEE

NM will send out the November reports shortly. His local branch of HSBC will close on 1st December, and it would not be practicable for him to go into the town centre as frequently as would be necessary for depositing cheques. He has spoken to the local Lloyds TSB bank. A new account would be on an e-business tariff, with six months free banking. The long-term bonds would need to stay with the HSBC. It was agreed to move the EIHA account to Lloyds TSB, in accordance with the attached authority form, proposed **KT**, seconded **BW**. **NM** had brought signatory paperwork for **TO** and **IJ** to sign.

It might be possible to have clubs paying online. However without a system of unique identification it would be very difficult to work out who the payments were from, and to check which teams were piling up debt.

Newcastle currently owe c. £2k. Val Wilkinson has stopped producing licences for them. Early in the season there were extenuating circumstances, but it was felt they should have resolved their financial situation by now. It was agreed that **NM** should send **IJ** the details of their financial position, and she should then write giving them 14 days to pay, starting from 28th September. If they do not, their players will be suspended.

INSURANCE & CHILD PROTECTION – MR OLIVER

Alexander Forbes have now been taken over by Lockton. This does not seem to mean any disadvantage to the EIHA. The employers' liability and public liability are shared between Zurich and SLE. All the policy details are on the website. Malcolm Preen will be asked to put these on a separate Insurance page. **TO** has obtained an extension to the personal accident insurance to cover players on a short-term trial.

There have been a number of child protection investigations, and several people have been suspended. Coach and manager suspensions will be discussed at the YMG meeting over the weekend. A coach was investigated by police for molesting a young girl. He was suspended, but then **TO** had to contact him again because he failed to stay away from the clubs where he had been coaching. He was later arrested. A manager attacked a young player, but **TO** found he could not send her a suspension letter because she was not registered. He said the disciplinary process is sometimes slow because of Charles Dacres' heavy workload. A coach has only just been reinstated after being suspended a year ago. **TO** is concerned about himself and Charles Dacres dealing with all the child protection discipline, not only because coming to decisions can take an unreasonably long time, but also because it is such a heavy responsibility. They would sometimes like to obtain additional opinions. There is no panel for dealing with these cases. The regional child protection officers are involved only in the early stages of the process. It would be unwise for other Directors to be involved in the decision-making, because they might be needed for appeals. **TO** will discuss this with Charles Dacres, who might have ideas of other people who would be useful to ask.

Oxford IHC say their suspended coach has received no support. However it is not usual for organisations to provide insurance or legal help for people who have been suspended after breaking their rules and codes of conduct. When the coaches were insured through the NCF (now sports coach UK), this included other benefits including a legal helpline. However the NCF trebled costs and reduced the cover, so it was decided to change insurers. It is unlikely that many coaches would be in favour of going back to scUK group membership, since this would mean the registration fee would need to go up to c. £100. Coaches wanting extra benefits can join scUK as individual members. The public liability insurance covers the coach if he is sued, e.g. for negligence, but if there is a criminal prosecution he has no protection. In the case of the Oxford coach, the EIHA had to wait until the police had finished their investigation before deciding if there was still a case to answer. The reinstatement letter includes a severe warning, since it was clear that his arrest was not groundless.

GH asked about the insurance implications for a game when the visiting goalkeeper arrived late and the referee insisted that the game must start without her. Her team put a player in goal

without goalkeeper equipment. The player is insured, since the situation is no different from when a team uses six skaters on a powerplay.

ESSEX C.C. WORK PERMIT – MR OLIVER

Someone from Chelmsford Junior IHC reported to Essex County Council that two U16s were playing for Chelmsford Chieftains. Until recently the EIHA were unaware of laws requiring young people to obtain work permits and licences for sport. NISA obtain licences for young participants in ice shows. Essex County Council insisted the players needed licences because they were playing in front of a paying public. They then refused licences for child protection and safety reasons, as opponents would not be able to distinguish between adults and minors. The letter from the council is challengeable, since it contains many errors, including citing the wrong act and quoting the duties of a chaperone in a passage on how players should behave. There have been rules in the past preventing U16s playing in senior teams. **BW** phoned the IIHF, who said according to their By-law 201 the minimum age for senior World Championships, men and women, is 16 on the start date of the competition. For U20 and U18 World Championships the minimum age is 15 on the start date of the competition. The IIHF have a form for under-age players requiring signatures from a parent and two doctors. **TO** is about to write to the CCPR. It would also be useful to compare with other sports with similar safety issues, such as rugby, and sports where there are many young players needing licences. The Board thought it best to say a player may play in a senior league as soon as they reach 16. Some thought U16s should continue to be allowed to play in the women's leagues, since these have such a high proportion of minors. Without U16s some women's teams would be very short of players. However councils might be willing to give licences to girls, since women's hockey is non-checking. There is no need to prevent U16s from playing in the U19 league, as this is a youth league. Essex County Council seem interested only in the EPIHL. **NM** highlighted potential problems of having the EPIHL being portrayed as a profit-making league and differentiated from the rest of EIHA hockey. U16s officiating in the EPIHL will need licences. In North America officials may officiate only at age groups lower than their own. There are no U16 coaches or managers.

It was pointed out that only one council has taken notice of this issue, and others have probably never thought about it. **NM** did not think it a good idea to make any more changes than strictly necessary, since this is hindering development. There could be major problems if rules are changed mid-season. It was agreed that changes would not be implemented until 1st August. **KT** will advise the EPIHL not to play U16s. With information from only one council, it is reasonable to say that no decisions can be made until after a risk assessment review. The rules for next season should be announced as soon as possible. For the time being, all U16 players who have not been refused licences may play in senior teams. **GH** will carry out a risk assessment regarding all U16s participating in hockey.

BW suggested changing the league structure to replace the U19 league and ENIHL with U18 and U25 leagues. However this has been considered before, and it turned out the ENIHL had only c. 6 over-age players per team. Changing to U18s would mean that players coming up from the U16s would have a reasonable amount of ice time, whereas now many are spending most of their time on the bench.

PLAYING AGREEMENT – MR LAIDLER

There have been several requests for U19 players to be allowed to play ENIHL at one rink and EPIHL at another, and there are similar issues in the women's leagues. There is a particular demand for these dispensations in the north east, where there are no EPIHL teams. **KT** said the ideal for development would be for young players to play up at will. However the registration system is based on players registering with a club. Allowing players to register for any teams they choose and obtain a licence for each would not only be complicated to administer, but also cause problems for clubs. **BW** said the GB U18s are in a very tough

World Championship group, and to bring players up to the right standard those who are good enough to play in the EPIHL should be allowed to do so. Two way agreements should not be available to players above U19, as those who have not made GB or EIHL teams before they leave the U19s are very unlikely to do so afterwards. At the moment dispensations are not being allowed for players below U19, but younger players might need a two way agreement if their own rink has no U19 team. Most thought players should be allowed to play up at a different rink only when there is no team at that level at their own rink. They should be able to play for only one team at each level. If they are playing U19 and EPIHL at one rink, they should not be allowed to play ENIHL at another. Likewise if they are playing U19 and WPL at one rink, they should not be allowed to play WD1 at another. **GH** said a player should be allowed to play U19 and WD1 at one rink and WPL at another. However WD1 teams would not be happy at this, as there is a big gap in standards between WD1 and WPL. **RL** said the situation for boys is no different, as there is also a big gap between ENIHL and EPIHL.

There was concern that if playing up at a different rink is made too easy, the number of players doing this will soar and some clubs may cease to be viable. Playing up at a different rink must be permitted only with the home club's agreement. It is also important to avoid problems such as those between Solihull Barons and Whitley Warriors, caused partly by lack of communication. On match night the home club must take priority. However the home club might be happy to let the player miss meaningless fixtures. It was agreed that if both teams have a game the player should play for the home club, but different arrangements can be made if both teams agree.

It was decided to adopt the two way agreement document proposed by Alan Moutrey, with a few amendments. Both clubs must sign, and a parent/guardian. Endorsement must come from the league chair. The player will need an extra licence for the second club, as is already being done for the women's teams. Implementation cannot be left till next season, as there are four dispensation requests waiting to be dealt with. **RL** will draft a news release, which **TO** and **GH** will examine before it goes out. It will then be posted on the website, with the agreement document available to download.

SMALL BENCH DISPENSATION

BW said the rules on small bench dispensation have caused more problems than anticipated, and not only in the women's leagues. He stressed that if rules are made they need to be enforced. There have been five applications for small bench dispensations, four of them in the women's leagues. Most thought such a small number did not constitute a problem, and the teams are doing their best to have the correct number of players available for games.

UPDATE ON PROMOTION OF THE SPORT: OXFORD INITIATIVE – MR MORALEE

NM's understanding was that David Hurn was going to put proposals forward, but so far there have been no proposals from any of the clubs. David Hurn said at the last South Joint Conference meeting that he contacted several Directors to ascertain whether Oxford were to supply feedback, and **KT** said no. **KT** however said he did not tell David Hurn that the Board did not want input from Oxford.

RL distributed sample leaflets and posters in A4, A3 and A2 format, and a paper on Marketing Materials for Local Clubs. The Board thought the leaflets and posters excellent. The A2 posters are much more expensive as they need to be produced by a different firm. There is probably little demand for posters bigger than A3, which is usually the largest which can be displayed on a noticeboard. It was agreed to order all the materials except A2 posters, in the suggested quantities. These will then be given to Conference officers, to give out to the people most likely to ensure they are made good use of. **RL** will make PDF files of the posters and leaflets, which clubs can post on their own websites. Clubs will be able to print out leaflets themselves or take the file to a printer. **RL** was thanked for his work on this.

David Hurn is unhappy because his child is having trouble finding hockey websites, and says running an internet search on ice hockey is no help to anyone in the UK thinking of taking up the game. However a search on ice hockey quickly finds UK governing body sites. David Hurn wants a link from the EIHA site to a BBC children's site. **KT** said he can see no point in promoting the BBC. **NM** said money can be allocated for work on the EIHA site if any specific proposals come in.

REVISION OF THE RULES & REGULATIONS – MR MORALEE

NM thought it would be useful to go over the proposed amendments, and provide a revised version to circulate in preparation for being voted on at the AGM. It should also be checked by Stephen Britton. It would then be printed and sent out to clubs. **RL** said there are many rules of competition which conflict with the Rules and Regulations. It was not thought necessary to have all the Board present to go over the Rules and Regulations, which is likely to take a whole day. A working group of **BW**, **GH**, **RL**, **NM** and **LM** will meet to work on this, and the others will send proposed amendments by email.

FACE-OFF TIMES – MR WILKINSON

There have been problems with Whitley Bay, Newcastle, Billingham and Bradford teams travelling to Nottingham on Sunday night. The players were not getting on the ice until after 7 p.m., so they arrived back at their home rink as late as 1 a.m. **BW** said this situation has been going on for years. He is reluctant to use child protection as a tool, but in this case recommended telling the NIC that if they do not resolve the situation their junior teams will not be allowed in the leagues. The CPSU advise that U10s should be home by 7 p.m. if they have school the next day. Most rinks are trying to resolve problems over face-off times, but Nottingham do not seem able to resolve this problem.

Also the introduction of penalties for late face-off has led to the games starting 10 minutes after the start of the ice slot and then being cut short. The slot of 5.30 – 7.15 will not accommodate an U19 game. **GH** wants to move the Sunday 7 p.m. games to Saturday and have U19 games on Sunday, but does not know if he will succeed in negotiating this. Juniors cannot use the arena prior to the EIHL game, because the EIHL say they need four hours of ice per game. Geoff Huckstep says if the face-off times are not arranged to suit the NIC, four junior teams will be dropped. This would however mean risking a lot of bad publicity.

LONDON NIGHTHAWKS – MR WILKINSON

IJ has received a letter from Andy French about problems between Romford IHC and London Nighthawks. He enquired about the status of nomadic teams, and received the reply that these have existed for many years. He is also asking about what can be done about hockey-related debts. Snowblades want to take out an injunction against Lesley Ellis or London Nighthawks. **IJ** has written to say that if they do this the EIHA will not intervene. **KT** said Romford IHC cannot blame the EIHA for this dispute, as it was they who dropped their women's team from the league.

There has been a dispensation request for Lois Hayes to play up for London Nighthawks. This is problematic because she is under 16, and also because Romford IHC do not want to work with London Nighthawks. It was agreed that the news release on two way agreements should specify that there will be no further dispensations for U16s to play senior hockey at a different rink until after the risk assessment. **GH** will write to inform Lesley Ellis of this.

BROADBAND TV – MR LAIDLER

RL has copied to the Board his email to Heath Rhodes. He is pleased with progress. There is no formal agreement, but the plans are that IMP will develop broadband TV coverage of

EPIHL games over this season, and are hoping to extend this to other leagues next season. IMP are happy to advise cameramen and take them on shoots. They also help with editing and technical requirements. They are about to start talking to individual clubs, and making arrangements for uploading film to the site for those which are not already doing this. **RL** wants free viewing for Directors. He encouraged them to take advantage of this. The arrangement does not bring in any income, but it is good publicity for the clubs.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The media company who made a short documentary on the Romford club approximately two years ago now want to make another. They would like to talk to other clubs as well. The Board have no objection to this.

KT has had a long discussion with Mark Johnson. He explained the problems with the building of the Manchester rink, with which he is heavily involved. Tests were done before the start of building, but these missed the bad areas. Cranes were unable to go on to the site because of rain. The delays in opening are impacting on the Flintshire clubs, in the same way as the delays at Cardiff are affecting the Coventry clubs. Mark Johnson is asking for EIHA support for building an ice rink in a warehouse at Cannock. It is too small for full-ice games, but could be used for U10s and coach and referee courses. The rink is intended to be a temporary one. Mark Johnson intends to build a full-size rink later on, and convert the small one to housing. He has not yet provided any drawings.

BW reported that GB are to host the Women's World Championships in March. UK Sport are providing £10k towards this. He believes there is a good chance of GB being selected to host the Seniors' World Championship group in 2008, as it will be the IIHF's centenary year, and GB were a founder member. He is optimistic about obtaining funding for this. The IIHF's centenary plans include having a World Hockey Day in 2008. **BW** is keen to have three big U10 jamborees, one at Hull or Sheffield, one in the South, and one in Scotland. This will need support from the EIHA and SIHL.

The meeting ended at 1.35 p.m.

Signed..... Date.....