

# ENGLISH ICE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

## Minutes of meeting of EPIHL

### Nottingham – 11 June, 2006

Present – *as per attendance record*

#### 1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

Ken Taggart welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for making the journey today. He looked forward to a constructive meeting.

#### 2. APOLOGIES/CLUB ROLL CALL

All teams were represented. No apologies had been made other than, through the way in which meetings were being held over this weekend, standing apologies from directors and officers who were required to attend other section meetings currently taking place.

#### 3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN SOLIHULL ON 26 FEBRUARY, 2006

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February were proposed a correct record by Swindon. The proposal was seconded by Romford. The minutes were accepted as a true record.

There were no items arising from the minutes other than issues on today's agenda.

#### 4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

KT ran through the slide presentation he had made that morning to the EIHA Ltd AGM which had, he hoped, clarified a number of issues. It had also helped to put into perspective the various roles and duties of directors/officers and also the inter-relationships between sections. The minutes of all meetings from this weekend will appear on the EIHA website and the Chairman confirmed that he and the Secretary would ensure that no confidential issues would be detailed in these minutes.

The growth of the EIHA had been considerable – from 60 teams in 1983 to the current 297 teams. The EPIHL this past season had proven to be one the most competitive campaigns in recent history. There had been problems but the response from the EIHA had been to try and solve them at little disruption to the season. Two issues in particular had caused concerns:

- the position of goalkeepers at the close of the regular season leading into play offs had been a major problem – and teams had, he felt, tried to improve the chances of success at the last minute. The Rules of Competition, to be agreed later in this meeting, addressed those concerns.
- concerns had also been expressed about the Sheffield v Milton Keynes game at the very end of the regular season. KT outlined his reasoning for the decisions made.

Despite these problems, he repeated his feelings that the season had been one of the best on record.

A pleasing duty for the Chairman today was to present the EPIHL Fair Play Trophy and KT asked the owners of Hull Stingrays to come forward and accept the Trophy from the League.

#### 5. DISCIPLINE SECRETARY'S REPORT

KT reported that Andy French would not be acting in the role of Discipline Secretary for the coming season and he thanked Andy for all the hard work he had put in on behalf of the League over recent

seasons. He went on to explain how the disciplinary system ran and said that the EIHA were looking for more people with a good knowledge of the game to be involved with discipline at all levels.

AF said that, from a practical point of view, last season had run very well from a discipline point of view. The one issue he suggested needed review was the 10 minute misconduct penalty which had been taken out of penalty points last season. His view was that the move had created problems and the move should be reversed for next season. Otherwise the penalty points system should remain the same. The new rules for next season would, he felt, cause problems and he urged a period of leniency while everyone got used to the new rules.

From a coaching point of view, it had been suggested that a meeting of EPIHL coaches might be useful and Alan Moutrey suggested he organise a meeting in late August. The meeting was not opposed to such a move. He would see this meeting involving the Referee in Chief and said that team owners would also be welcome should they wish to attend.

KT ended the reports on this issue by repeating his call for involvement by more people – anyone interested, or proposed, should contact him direct.

## **6. REGISTRATION SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Sue Tomalin reported that there had been no major problems. The season had seen a similar number of registrations per team and she confirmed that there would be no change to documentation or fees for the coming season.

The Handbook form, circulated today, now included the name and contact details of the team registration secretary and ST also suggested that teams let her have the name of a deputy to that person. One issue which would help a great deal would be if teams submitted registration forms for players straight away rather than waiting to the end of the summer and sending them all in together. Payment could be made nearer the start of the season – ST would prepare documentation but would not issue registration cards until full payment had been received.

The standard registration pack would be circulated by email as soon as names were collated and would, she said, answer most questions.

Discussion ensued on the need for licence cards in view of the decision that officials would no longer check them at the start of the game. AF suggested that cards be checked by the scorer and the thought was also put forward that duplicate cards for junior players should be bought.

As far as ITC cards were concerned, it was reported that the Elite League had asked for work permits for players from lower leagues in the USA. The DoE would not grant work permits for players in EPIHL and ENIHL. IHUK has asked the IIHF to investigate why EU countries were still being asked to pay £700 for ITCs. Neville Moralee referred to the rumour that Elite teams were paying less than EPIHL for ITCs but refuted the idea and explained how the system was being worked by the Elite League.

It was agreed that the rule of dressing 4, but icing 3, non-British trained players would continue in EPIHL.

## **7. STATISTICIAN'S REPORT**

The only significant issue from the Statistician's point of view was the question of playing overtime and the effect of that decision on the building of statistics for the League. There was a broad debate about the value of an overtime period and the effect on the game from the spectator's point of view.

It was generally felt that this move would add an element of excitement to the game and could generate better crowds.

The proposal made by Peterborough was that: at the end of a drawn game both teams be awarded 1 point each; then a “5 minute golden goal” overtime period be played for one additional point; if no goal, points awarded remain at one to each team; overtime be played at 4 on 4. The proposal was seconded by Milton Keynes.

The proposal was put to the meeting and was carried. The Rules of Competition to be overwritten for the coming season by this agreement.

The Referee in Chief reminded teams that they would need to guarantee enough ice time at the end of each game to make provision for the overtime period if needed.

## **8. REFEREE IN CHIEF’S REPORT**

Mohammed Ashraff reminded teams that game sheets were available from Clive Moore, today or later by post. To aid scorers, he and Malcolm Preen had been working on the “perfect game sheet” which would be a comprehensive example of what to do, and not to do, with game sheets. The target was to have the sheet available on the web site later this month.

MA thanked IoW and Romford for DVD material which would be used on officials camps over the summer.

With regard to rule interpretation, a meeting of the IIHF was to be held in Leipzig on 7<sup>th</sup> July and MA hoped to be able to issue EIHA in-house rules by 1<sup>st</sup> August.

As had been reported at the EIHA Ltd AGM, the OCM would no longer be operating the “no card, no game” rule as officials would not be checking cards next season. He suggested that players be not iced if the team could not produce a card or some communication from ST.

As regards the more significant changes for next season:

- Referee’s will have no discretion about penalties, they will be instructed on a “see it, call it” basis and so teams might anticipate more penalties being called in the coming season
- Any instance of violent conduct, or any threat to personal safety of officials, will lead to the game being stopped and the police being called
- Any threats made player to player will result in an automatic 10 minute misconduct
- There will be no crowding of the referee; any player crossing the outer marker around the referee (i.e. the linesman) will be awarded an automatic 10 minute misconduct
- Fighting – helmets can stay on but gloves must come off; where there is a non-willing combatant, the first player to throw a punch will receive a match penalty
- Fighting – where there are willing combatants, as soon as the first player goes to the floor or there is an injury, the fight must cease; failure to stop will result in player being ejected from the game
- Goading – this is covered by player to player threats – i.e. 10 minute misconduct

Bracknell asked whether referees could attend team training sessions prior to the start of the season to discuss the rule changes with coaching staff and players. MA said this could be arranged and the teams agreed to cover the costs of such sessions.

Where a player was ejected from the game, he/she must remain in the dressing room until after the game – or leave the rink out of the sight of the officials, otherwise the team will receive a match penalty and the player will receive a further suspension.

A 2% increase was to be applied to match fees for the coming season. Also, mileage fees would be increased to 40p/mile with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2006. Payment to officials can be made at the end of the game – when they sign the game sheet.

## 9. FINANCIAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Neville Moralee presented his financial report for the EPIHL, stating that the audited account for the EIHA Ltd had been accepted at yesterday's AGM.

Reports were presented on the outcome of the Finals Weekend in Coventry. H Howton reported that the organising committee would be considering the split of funds during the next couple of weeks and would also seek the views of the teams prior to making a recommendation to the Directors. NM said that last year the cash had been put as a credit on teams' accounts with the EIHA and he looked forward to clarification on this point in due course.

## 10. RULES OF COMPETITION

The Rules of Competition as previously circulated were adopted with the following amendments:

- League Identity and Format – the second paragraph to be amended to read as follows “*The recognised League season will run from Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2006 to Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2007. Play offs will take place between Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2007 and Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2007. The EPIHL Play Off Finals to take place on Saturday and Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2007.*”
- League Identity and Format – the last sentence of the fourth paragraph to be deleted and replaced with: “*The two groups will be organised on the following groups in terms of place finished at the end of the regular season – 1,4,5,8 and 2,3,6,7.*”
- Minimum Squads – the second and third bullet points in the third paragraph to have the following words added “*(but there will be no such restriction on netminders)*”
- Minimum Squads – the rule regarding eligibility to compete in end of season play offs will remain at 20 games (excluding netminders). If a player signs for an Elite team, then the 20 games start when he/she returns to EPIHL. A player signing for an Elite team can benefit from a 2 way contract but can only play Elite where the EPIHL team is not playing. If the Elite team wants the player, they need to seek the player's release from the EIHA registration and the player can then sign for the Elite team.
- Non-EIHA Trained Players - references in the item to “*Non-EIHA Trained Players*” be amended to read “*Non-British Trained Players*”. Also, the first sentence of the first paragraph be amended to read “*At any one time a minimum of 3 players to be iced who had been registered during at least two seasons as a player at Under 19 or lower within Great Britain*”.
- Game Results – the section regarding overtime to be amended to take account of the agreement set out in item 7 of these minutes.

## 11. WAGE CAPPING/PLAYER POINTS SYSTEM

A report had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting on this point and KT outlined briefly the background to the issue. An obvious issue with any wage capping system was the problematic enforcement of the rules introduced.

A broad debate ensued on the alternatives put forward, during which Slough suggested that an answer might be to reintroduce team owners meetings which could help generate closer working relations between teams throughout the League. It was agreed this be done, the preferred date to be 23<sup>rd</sup> July in Milton Keynes. No action at this point to be taken on the introduction of a wage capping system or player points system.

## **12. ISLE OF WIGHT**

IoW reminded teams that putting the sponsors badge on their uniform would mean a discount on ferry travel.

## **13. WEBSITE**

Bracknell suggested that, for marketing purposes, the EIHA website was not exciting enough. MA reported on recent meetings with a web designer to try and rectify this situation. While maintaining the information of the current site, it was generally agreed that the site did not have a great marketing appeal.

## **14. EPIHL IDENTITY**

Peterborough reminded all teams that the EPL logo had been designed for use by them and suggested that they use it on, and in, their programmes.

## **15. ROMFORD**

Andy French stated that he did not own or run Romford Raiders.

## **16. HULL**

Hull explained their discussions with the Elite League about a possible move to that League but confirmed that, at this stage, such a move looked unlikely, hence their agreement today to play EPIHL next season.