

ENGLISH ICE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION LIMITED
MEETING OF DIRECTORS 1ST DECEMBER 2007

Minutes of meeting of EIHA Board on 1st December 2007 at the Renaissance Hotel, Derby at 9.30 a.m.

Present: Ken Taggart, David Hurn, Neville Moralee, Rob Laidler, Irene Jones, Bob Wilkinson, Geoff Hemmerman, Rita MacKriel (YMC Chair), Mohammed Ashraff (Referee-in-Chief), Val Wilkinson (Secretary for Youth Hockey and Junior Registrations).

In attendance: Liz Moralee (minutes).

Apologies: Kate Cady, SportsAid.

OPENING REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

KT thanked everyone for coming. **MA** was thanked for booking such a good hotel.

PROPOSAL TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE LAST BOARD MEETING
8TH SEPTEMBER 2007

The minutes of the Board meeting on 8th September were read and approved, proposed **GH**, seconded **IJ**.

MATTERS ARISING

None.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – MR TAGGART

KT said there are no huge problems. There were difficulties with fixtures at the beginning of the season, mainly due to the EIHL fixture list being delayed. These are now running more smoothly, and communication is improving. The fixture situation in the South has improved a lot since Tony Lack took over as fixture secretary. The Coaching Programme have announced plans for a Coach Level Three course in July, which **KT** is very pleased about as he has been wanting this for some time. There is some turmoil in IHUK, and **BW** and **NM** are having to cope with a lot of aggravation over matters for which they were not responsible.

It is important to finalise the revised Rules & Regulations. The Board also need to make progress with the updated Development Plan. They should establish the strategic aims first, then have the sections fill in their aims and goals and make sure the plan is workable.

FINANCIAL REPORT – MR MORALEE

NM has distributed the November report. He does not think this contains anything controversial. He was thanked for doing a great job with the finances for nearly two decades.

He consulted Bexons about remuneration such as meeting allowances for Directors and officers. They sent a letter saying payment over and above expenses would incur liability to income tax and perhaps NI contributions. The EIHA would need a PAYE scheme. Such payments to Directors would also appear to contravene the Articles of Association. Payments of less than £8.5k could be made in a non-cash form. **IJ** had the same answer from her accountants at work. **MA** said his employers give out vouchers. There was a discussion about holding meetings abroad. While this could be done more cheaply than a meeting in England with the accompanying high mileage costs for some Directors, there would inevitably be bad publicity. The Board felt that any kind of remuneration scheme would be unfeasible.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Board decided to work on this after the meeting.

RULES & REGULATIONS

The Board decided to work on this after the meeting.

REFEREEING PROGRAMME

There was some explanation about line managers for the programmes. The Board as a whole are responsible for the programmes, and for matters such as the Development Plan. However the head of the programme has to deal with most of the aggravation. **KT** is line manager for the Referee Programme, **NM** for the Coaching Programme, **BW** for the national teams, **DH** for child protection, **IJ** for company business and communications.

Some Board members had wanted to talk about the running of the Referee Programme because of issues raised by Simon Norcott calling Andy French about returning to officiating. **MA** explained that an official's registration is accepted only if the official is expected to be an asset to the EIHA. Simon Norcott lined c. 12 EIHA games in 16 years, when he always criticised the referees. The OCM therefore advised the EIHL that if they wanted to use Simon Norcott they should insure him themselves.

KT, Allan Batchelder and **MA** think it would be in the EIHA's best interests not to insure officials who officiate only in the EIHL. The OCM are increasingly unhappy at the EIHL taking the EIHA's quality officials. While it is inevitable that the best officials will join the EIHL, it causes a lot of problems when the EIHL do not keep the EIHA informed. **KT** said whatever the EIHL want they take, without considering anyone else. They are now debating using a four-man system. **BW** said the EIHL should be allowed to use EIHA officials only when all EIHA games are covered. **MA** said the problem with making such changes is that the EIHA would then be expected to run other programmes in a similar way. If the EIHL take an EIHA official, the effect cascades down through the leagues and ultimately it is the U10s who lose out most. An U10 game is probably even more important to the players than an EIHL game. Ken Riddell and Allan Batchelder would like to use a two-man system in the EIHL in preference to junior games losing their officials. The only problem with this would be the bad publicity.

The EIHA have been in touch repeatedly with the EIHL with their concerns that when officials move up to the EIHL they receive little training and no written feedback. This has had no effect, although even the most experienced officials are struggling to keep up with the development of the game. The EIHL officials are invited to EIHA camps, but most do not go. **NM** said few EIHL coaches seem interested in developing their skills, and the general attitude in the EIHL seems to be that they do not need to learn anything. There will be a meeting in January of the EIHA, EIHL and SIHL referees-in-chief, chaired by Simon Kirkham. The date is still to be decided. There was a discussion about Simon Kirkham's progress as IHUK Referee-in-Chief. It was explained that he is head of discipline for the EIHL and assesses their officials, which Andy French no longer does. For IHUK he was brought in mainly for liaison with the IIHF. **KT** would like EIHL officials to help out in the EIHA, including officiating EIHA games. **GH** however has found EIHL officials have a completely different way of officiating, which does not work in the EIHA. **MA** said Paul Staniforth, Matt Thompson and Dave Cloutman attend camps and officiate as they are instructed, but there are other EIHL officials who do not listen.

The OCM feel that when the EIHA lose officials to the EIHL, they should receive something in return. However at the moment the EIHL do not even give them any recognition. The work over the last three years in recruiting more officials and therefore having better coverage for games has been undone by the expansion of the EIHL. **MA** would like a scheme whereby when they take on an official for more than three games, the EIHL should pay the EIHA £500

(Clive Moore proposed such a scheme several years ago but it was never implemented). This would help recoup losses made by the Refereeing Programme.

There are c. 20 officials who do only EIHL games. Officials are insured as individuals. The policy excludes professional games, but says they may progress into professional games. This passage was added for the benefit of players on EPIHL/EIHL dual contracts. MA will ask Tony Oliver for clarification. **BW** said he is opposed to handing anything over to the EIHL. MA asked if they could be registered with IHUK instead. **NM** said he and other IHUK directors from the EIHA have been fighting this kind of centralisation ever since IHUK was formed, and there are still people involved with IHUK who want them to take over a great many of the partner organisations' functions, including all registrations. He would not however object to the EIHL taking full responsibility for their own officials. Officials' registration fees barely cover the cost of insurance and administration, and they are sent rule books free of charge. The EIHL would not have any trouble obtaining insurance for their officials. **GH** said the EIHA are helping officials develop, and this should include seeing that they are insured if they move up to the EIHL. MA said the Refereeing Programme have tried to work with the EIHL as they have tried with former professional leagues, but always come up against the same problems. The change would not prevent the EIHA assisting the EIHL with officials. Officials could register for both EIHA and EIHL. It was decided that MA should compose a letter for the Board to send to the EIHL, telling them they need to insure their own officials.

IHUK UPDATE – MR WILKINSON

On the IHUK board the new SIHL representatives are Stuart Muir, who became SIHL Chair after previously dealing only with rec hockey, and David Hand, who took over when Glen Reilly left. At the last IHUK meeting it was agreed that each partner organisation should be allowed to bring an extra person to the meeting. The aim is to obtain additional input and fresh ideas. **BW** and **NM** think the best person for the EIHA to bring is **RL**, because of his positions with the EPIHL and Northern League.

BW distributed an email Eamon Convery sent to the IHUK board about problems with EIHL teams releasing players for the Euro Challenge. It was felt that this makes it very difficult to select EIHL players for GB. **BW** said the email sounds like a threat, and it seems the EIHL have already decided to withdraw their players, but expect IHUK to do the dirty work. It was agreed at the Annual Congress that GB would participate in the Euro Challenge, and at the August board meeting it was assumed that they would take part. The Board think the EIHL's actions over this are a major embarrassment to IHUK and are letting many people down. The Semi-Annual Congress was one of the most discouraging experiences **BW** has had since becoming involved in hockey. Eamon Convery was unhappy about him including Fred Meredith and **KT** in an email. **BW** told him **KT** is entitled to be kept informed, just as he and Mike Cowley pass on information to the EIHL board. The EIHL also want to be able to bring in replacement players after the IIHF deadline, against IHUK's recommendation. The IIHF are likely to say they should use British players.

It used to be accepted among the IHUK board that with major issues all directors had to be in agreement before taking any action. However over ITCs decisions were made on a 2 – 1 majority. SIHL will not want to jeopardise the Northern League, or Scottish participation in the Conference Tournament. Many people in Scotland would like to have the School of Excellence taken over by IHUK and extended to SIHL players. **BW** is very unhappy about this, since when IHUK were formed he asked them for help with the School of Excellence and Richard Stirling wrote back refusing. It could not have continued if the EIHA had not taken it on.

The EIHL are blaming IHUK for problems connected with ITCs. IHUK received a lot of abuse over the Continental Cup. The Coventry players who took part without ITCs after applying in vain to convert their limited ITCs to unlimited have been cleared to play only until 31st December. When players play without an ITC the IIHF may levy a fine of up to 5k ChF per player per game. The bill would go to IHUK, and would bankrupt them. The EIHA

have already told the EIHL that they will not pay the fines. **NM** said the EIHL are using IHUK to fight their battles. At the IIHF Semi-Annual Congress the EIHL said the IHUK board had decided unanimously to regard 45 players as having unlimited ITCs although their applications had not been approved. When he said the decision was not unanimous, he was accused of disloyalty to IHUK. He has asked who will pay for obtaining legal advice about ITCs for EU players, and for taking the unlimited ITC issue to CAS, which is likely to be costly. The EIHL said IHUK will pay, as it has been agreed to be an IHUK matter. He has pointed out that the EIHA did not agree with these actions. He considers that even if a decision was made democratically by the IHUK board, it does not mean the EIHA have to fund actions they do not agree with. The Board think the EIHL have made some valid points about the ITC system, especially about conversion of limited to unlimited ITCs, but they should have raised the matter constitutionally. If the EIHL want to use professional players they should expect to pay the associated costs, and ITCs are a relatively small amount compared with their total running costs. **KT** is concerned about the future of the EIHL, who are having talks with Fife Flyers and Dundee Stars, because they are worried about the possibility of Basingstoke and Cardiff dropping out. If the EIHL folded, the EIHA would not want to accept the arena teams. He and **RL** will be involved with the EIHL over what happens next year. If Eamon Convery contacts him he will get in touch with **BW** and **NM**.

The new controlled migration system will mean major changes, not only to the EIHL but to youth hockey, World Championships and challenge games. Only an elite player will be eligible for a certificate, and the club will need to prove that they are not taking the place of an EU player. It will not affect the EIHA until the 2009/10 season. Unfortunately hockey does not now have anyone in a position to point out to the government problems with policies where the impact on sport has not been thought through. **BW** said at a meeting of sports governing bodies, some people were very upset at the number of foreign players coming in, while others said they were talking nonsense. At that time hockey players were Tier 2. There will also be requirements for speaking English for people coming from outside the EU. James Purnell has recently made a statement saying that future policy will consider sport as standing on its own. The chair of Sport England has resigned.

KT said it is important to work with Planet Ice, who will soon be running more than half the ice rinks in England. Mark Johnson is persuading councils to give him a building free and then installing a rink cheaply. If he can prove over a three-year period that the rink is profitable, the council will erect a full-size rink. There are plans for this at Torquay and Cornwall.

Fred Meredith is up for re-election to the IIHF Council in 2008. Eamon Convery and Mike Cowley are asking what he does for IHUK. They are thinking of having Mike Cowley nominated. The Board feel the EIHL are planning this not because they care about the IIHF, but only to get their own way. They do not seem to understand that there is no guarantee that there will be anyone from the UK on the IIHF Council. There are far more federations than there are Council members. **NM** has already told them that none of the IHUK board would have a chance of being elected next year. **KT** said IHUK need to vote for Fred Meredith, who tends to help and stand up for smaller hockey nations. Other nations' delegates often care only for their own nation's interests and cause problems for others. The Board decided to advise IHUK that they need to nominate Fred Meredith to the IIHF Council: proposed **KT**, seconded **IJ**, and unanimously agreed.

KT said he would like **BW** and **NM** to consider whether the EIHA should remain part of IHUK if their relations with the IIHF, other national federations and their own partner organisations continue to deteriorate. **BW** said he does not want the EIHA to become alienated from IHUK, and it is even more important to maintain good relations with the IIHF. There is no point asking who get value from IHUK, as there is little scope for anyone to do so. He has asked Fred Meredith about what could happen if IHUK no longer existed. The IIHF say they will not recognise the EIHA as a national federation. **BW** pointed out to them that the EIHA are recognised by Sport England, and have 80% of hockey participation in the UK. The BOA would need to decide whether GB teams could be replaced by home nation teams. He said the EIHL are continually undermining IHUK's position with the IIHF and the

rest of the world. If the EIHL carry on refusing to pay for ITCs they will have to be thrown out of IHUK. SIHL would probably have to be thrown out too if they continued supporting the EIHL. It was decided that **BW** and **NM** should write a report for the next Board meeting on the pros and cons of the EIHA dropping out of IHUK.

GUEST FROM SPORTSAID

No one from SportsAid was able to attend.

PROPOSALS BY HEAD OF PHYSIOTHERAPY

Kate Cady was unable to attend as she was recovering from an operation. **BW** reported that she is concerned about the quality of some of the England team physios. The Board think people should be on the staff of England and Conference teams only if they are suitably qualified. One physio has few physiotherapy qualifications. Another has been contacted several times about providing evidence of qualifications and a CRB check, but has not replied. **IJ** told the team coach to obtain copies of these documents. The coach says the physio is qualified and CRB checked. However the CRB check is with another sports governing body, and while **RM** has explained that he needs another check done with the EIHA, the physio refused, saying this is not necessary. During the meeting **KT** phoned the coach to tell him that without evidence of qualifications and a CRB check with the EIHA, the physio will not go on the trip. **KT** will deal with the situation from now on.

CHILD PROTECTION – MR HURN

DH said there have been no major child protection cases recently. He and **MA** have largely worked out plans for having all the officials CRB checked. The checks should be complete by the end of March.

He has been working on issues raised by the CRB audit. Two clubs in the South are now sending CRB forms to Sandra Annetts for checking, and she sends the forms back until they are correct. So far 100% of these forms have had errors. This process will soon be extended to other clubs in the South.

The online child protection training is being piloted by some Directors and officers, **MA** and other officials. **RM** found the material needs to be read thoroughly in order to answer the questions. She is concerned about the possibility of people doing the course in place of someone else. She thinks it would be best for everyone who needs child protection training to attend a one-day course, with the online course used as refresher training. **LM** said some of the coach instructors have the same opinion. Holding classroom courses for all team officials would be expensive, and problematic due to shortage of instructors. It was pointed out that when people first attend coach or referee courses no one verifies their identity, and people need to be expected to take responsibility for their own actions. The officials will complete the course over the Christmas period. When it can go live will depend on what problems they find. **GH** has spotted a problem with one question. **MA** wants the course to be demonstrated at the AGM. This will need internet access, a projector and a screen.

WOMEN'S U16 LEAGUE – MR HEMMERMAN

GH said the U16 Girls league is now running. The only problem is in the North East. At the Women's Annual Meeting Billingham and Newcastle expressed interest in entering a team. Whitley Bay and Billingham have since made an agreement that Whitley Bay's U16 girls could play only for Billingham. As Whitley Bay did not attend the meeting, they have been guided by Billingham and not sought advice from the Women's Section. This means Newcastle have insufficient players to enter a team, and some Whitley Bay players have decided not to join Billingham. There are enough players in the area for two teams; Whitley

Bay, Newcastle and Billingham have in excess of 27 players. At the Annual Meeting **GH** made it clear that the competition was not about winning but about enabling girls to play. Most thought making the North East clubs rotate their U16 girls or treat them as one pot of players would be interfering too far in club matters. **GH** will draft a letter to the North East clubs asking them to reconsider the situation for the sake of the players who are being excluded, and distribute it to the Board.

The England U16 Girls team played in the Prague tournament although their opponents were senior women's teams, but the Board think they need to follow IIHF guidelines and not allow them to play against senior teams in future. **GH** said it is important to continue the England U16 Girls programme, especially now there is a GB U18 Women programme, but the team needs to be playing against other U16 teams. There will only be one other U16 team at the 2008 Prague tournament. **BW** has written to other federations with good women's programmes asking if they have an U16 girls' national team. The only country he has found that has one is Sweden, and the Sweden team would be vastly superior to England. Few countries are able to support an U18 girls' team, and it is likely some women's teams will drop out of the Winter Olympics. While women's hockey is booming in North America, in Europe there seems to be little interest. While **KT** thought the U16 Girls should play U16 boys' teams, as the girls have the advantage of being accustomed to non-checking hockey, most thought this would not work. The U16 Girls might instead be able to play against club teams, who might want to travel to England. **GH** said Sweden would probably not defeat them more heavily than a top Czech or Slovak club side, and however one-sided the game it is still good experience. **KT** will look for US teams to come for a challenge game. It was felt that since **GH** took over as chair the Women have made rapid progress, and members do not give much recognition for such work.

ANY LEAGUE UPDATES

KT said Bracknell Bees are having a lot of problems, mainly as a result of the financial difficulties of their former shared ownership with Basingstoke Bison. He is having a meeting with Martin Weddell about finding solutions. He will ring round the Board to update them on the situation. Otherwise the EPIHL is working well, although last season's three weak teams are still weak. Many non-British trained players have moved between clubs, and there have also been some coaching changes. Plans for the Finals Weekend at Coventry are on schedule. He and **RL** are discussing changes to its finances, however the split of the profits will be as before.

RL said the ENIHL is going quite well. There have been one or two disputes between clubs. Blackburn would not listen when he tried to find a solution to their issue with Grimsby over a cancelled game. He will speak to them again this week. Coaches of some North teams are likely soon to receive bans for letting their teams accumulate too many penalty points, and the teams are worried because some of these coaches are also players. Clubs are starting to introduce fines for players who are given big penalties. Some clubs are in touch every week asking about what they are allowed to do. He has said if a team's regular head coach is unavailable, the Level 2 coach they use will be deemed the head coach. They need to control their players from the start of the season, and he also thinks it is sensible to have coaches who do not play for the team. The penalty points totals are higher than last season, because of the 1 point for 10-minute penalties, and frequency of punches to the head. Many of the penalties are to older players who cannot keep up. 39% of ENIHL players are over 25. There is a wide variation in make-up of teams: Coventry started the season with no over-25s, while Grimsby have 61%. At the league's Annual Meeting the clubs were told they should police the level of over-25s themselves, and the situation would be reviewed. It will be discussed at the ENIHL meeting in January.

RM said the only major issue in the Youth Section is gamesheets. While Malcolm Preen is doing extremely well with a huge amount of work, he makes no allowances for the fact that anyone can make a mistake. In one case stats were not recorded because of a 1-second discrepancy between goalie times. He wants an electronic system starting from next season,

but for this he would like all the stats to be correct. It was felt that his letters to clubs are polite. It is clear why he is frustrated over discrepancies in shots on goal. While the standard of gamesheets is improving, some are terrible, with mistakes such as getting the score wrong. Letters telling clubs their stats are to be reinstated because they have provided correct gamesheets three times running are seen by some as patronising. Clubs are finding it harder to persuade people to do gamesheets, as they are frightened of the parents' reaction if they make mistakes and the stats are not recorded. They are probably unaware that even if there are mistakes the stats are in fact recorded, they just do not go on the website. Some think it would be better to say whatever is on the gamesheet stands. Parents often consider that only the scores are important. The UK is the only country that has goal judges for junior games, and this is only because the clubs voted to bring them back. If there is a huge insurance payout for the Martin Sibley insurance case, the Board will recommend not having goal judges for junior games, since some rinks still have only netting behind the goals. This would cause problems for EPIHL clubs, who find stats very useful when looking to sign young players. Some said the EPIHL coaches should go to watch these players instead. The solicitors need to know what would happen if the case went to court. They asked why the EIHA have not done risk assessments at rinks. **KT**'s reply was that the EIHA do not run rinks. The rules cover safety of players on the ice, but not people off the ice, even minor officials. Dispensing with goal judges would also remove most of the gamesheet problems.

Steve Taylor is working on a presentation for the Board about the Coaching Programme's plans. Minutes from their recent meeting will be available shortly. The Level Three course will need to be formally authorised by IHUK.

In the Women's Leagues, **GH**'s biggest concern at the moment is the imbalance in numbers of teams between WD1 North and South.

IJ said the Rec Section are managing well. She needs to tell one team not to send gamesheets to her. Approximately one third of registration payments are now made online. The Rec Committee were thanked for keeping the Board updated about finances.

VW is planning changes to the junior registration system for 2008/9. The new system has no licences. Instead clubs will receive a master spreadsheet of players, plus a sheet for each team, similar to that for rec teams, to attach to the gamesheet. This will mean changes to rules specifying that people may not play without a licence. Registrations will now be able to be processed when she is away, by **GH** giving temporary numbers. The rec system has found a few drawbacks, for example many players still have no photos. The rosters include players who are not currently registered, so teams have to be careful to check the registration dates. **IJ** plans to speak to Tony Wood about some of these issues. Junior clubs will need to make sure everyone has the list when they need it, as with licences. Instead of having duplicate licences, clubs may pay an extra £5 to have a player on a second list. Some thought players should be able to play up at will. This would mean having to attach more than one list to the gamesheet, making it harder to check. At the moment clubs can choose whether to pass licences between team managers or pay for duplicates. Although the officials no longer check licences, the number of duplicates has increased this season, for convenience or because clubs lose licences. Alternatives would be increasing all junior registration fees by £5 and automatically putting them on two lists, or having players register for each team they will play for. It is important for players to be able to play up at short notice. Clubs are likely to be unhappy both at blanket increases in fees and at admin fees for duplicate registrations when there are no licences, even though they will benefit from an improved system. The Board agreed that **VW** should go ahead with the new system. The duplicate registration issue needs further discussion; most thought teams should have a copy of the list for each age group their players belong to.

The meeting ended at 2.45 p.m.

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