

ENGLISH ICE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Minutes of meeting of EPIHL

Milton Keynes – 9 December, 2007

Present – *as per attendance record*

Ken Taggart (Chair), Rob Laidler (Secretary), Andy French (Fixtures), Malcolm Preen (Stats), Mohammed Ashraff (Referee-in-Chief).

Teams represented: Bracknell, Chelmsford, Guildford, Milton Keynes, Peterborough, Romford, Sheffield, Slough, Swindon, Wightlink

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

Ken Taggart welcomed everyone to the meeting, saying that he saw the EPIHL running smoothly and setting up a very competitive run to the play offs.

For information, he explained that the Board were currently undertaking a major review of the EIHA Rules and Regulations and hopefully the outcome of that review would be presented to members at the June AGM.

He also updated teams on the present position regarding the litigation following an incident with a goal judge at a junior match. One potential outcome of the situation could be the removal of goal judges from all games with that role being passed to the scorer (no definite decision until result of litigation was clear). He reminded all teams that they were responsible for ensuring that they maintained at all times adequate public liability insurance and in response to his direct question all teams present confirmed that they held current policies.

2. APOLOGIES/CLUB ROLL CALL

Apologies for absence were recorded from Sue Tomalin (Registrations and Discipline) and from David Candlin (Telford).

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 JUNE 2007 IN TELFORD

The minutes of the meeting had been circulated prior to this meeting and were accepted as a true record (proposed by Chelmsford and seconded by Sheffield).

There were no issues arising from the minutes which were not covered on today's agenda.

4. LEAGUE REPORTS

Fixtures

AFR reported on the present position. The EPIHL Cup semi-finals were to be sorted. MK v Bracknell was set as 16 Jan in Bracknell (8pm) and 24 January in MK (7.45pm). Sheffield and Slough agreed to discuss dates after the meeting and inform AF accordingly.

The Knock Out Cup games between Bracknell and Chelmsford was outstanding. Again, teams agreed to discuss after the meeting and inform AF accordingly.

In the EPIHL Cup, the game between Invicta and Slough had not taken place (poor ice condition after the Slough team had arrived at the rink) and it was agreed that the Chairman and secretary discuss this situation and decide on a course of action as appropriate.

AF reminded teams playing over Xmas that all face off times were to be confirmed as soon as possible.

Discipline

In ST's absence, KT reported that he saw an improved position with teams appearing to have better control of players.

P Wing asked whether a "half season" discipline report could be produced for each team to compare with their own records. KT said he would discuss this with ST.

Registrations

KT reported on this, saying that from the EIHA point of view all seemed OK.

Statistics

MP reported from an administrative point of view the EPIHL was proving to be the best league in terms of statistical returns after games. He outlined the manner in which penalty shoot outs should be recorded on game sheets and also described the biggest single problem throughout all leagues – that of games sheets simply not adding up.

Attitude towards League officials

RL reported on three instances so far this season where the attitude shown towards league management committee members by coaching and management staff within EPIHL teams was far less than he would regard as acceptable. Any further indiscretions of this nature would, he promised, meet with a far more severe response by the LMC. In addition, AF pointed out that, despite repeated comments on some team forums, he was not responsible for discipline of any type or at any level within the EIHA. KT reminded all teams that their web sites, and those of any fan base which carried their name/logo, were their responsibility and as such teams could be called before the EIHA to answer issues on those sites.

5. REFEREE IN CHIEF'S REPORT

Despite problems throughout the Association in terms of providing adequate coverage by officials, MA said that he faced no particular problems with the EPIHL and suggested anyone with an issue could raise it now.

AF referred to the problem over the number of officials at games. MA said his strategy was to try and provide full allocation to all games whereas most games in the ENIHL and other leagues were having to cope with 2 or even 1 man systems.

6. PLAY OFF FINALS

HH reported on the preliminary preparations for the event. Hotels had been booked as required and the venue arrangements had been agreed with Planet Ice. HH asked for volunteers to take part in the sub-group running the event – Sheffield volunteered their services.

One issue raised by MP was that he would really like game sheets from the finals to reach him very soon after the event (there had been some considerable delay last time) in order that the web site and circular to press, etc. could reflect the outcome of the weekend upon its conclusion.

7. PROFESSIONALISM OF TEAMS REGARDING THE MEDIA

M Thompson (Swindon) had put this on the agenda but it was not taken further as he was not present at today's meeting.

8. LEAGUE FORMAT 2008/2009

S Nell (Swindon) raised this issue, suggesting that teams should be prepared to make a commitment to the league as early as possible to allow adequate planning for next season. He felt that by around the beginning of May teams should be deciding on what they are doing next season and so should be in a position to make a commitment rather than wait until the June section meeting.

Also, KT raised again the issue of start date for the new season. The vast majority of nations started the season 1 October and he felt that the financial implications of running a team during September would alone probably question the sense of starting early September. There was general agreement that a 1 October start should be seriously considered at the next meeting.

MA raised the fact that teams were now being organised in Eire and that at least one had expressed an interest in some form of involvement with the EPIHL. Travel cost would obviously be an issue but it was generally felt that this could be worked on if some form of sponsorship was in place to cover additional travel costs. MA suggested a first step would be to open a dialogue with the teams and to start a discussion between them and the LMC who could then assess possibilities.

9. LEAGUE SPONSORSHIP

KT reported on a recent communication from Elaine Witteridge explaining that very little support had been forthcoming from the EPIHL teams in supplying the range of information a potential sponsor would need to see. Only 5 teams had responded to a circular.

P Wing suggested that if the EPIHL teams were unable to service the needs of the person seeking sponsorship on their behalf, then they were unlikely to come close to servicing the needs of an actual sponsor.

Following a general discussion, it was agreed not to progress this avenue further.

10. ICE MEDIA PRODUCTIONS – TV COVERAGE

RL asked whether the teams had seen any progress in this respect and a quite negative response was forthcoming. The situation was on-going and it was agreed that IMP would need to take this forward if they wanted to develop the situation.

11. BRACKNELL – ICING INELIGIBLE PLAYER

The game between Bracknell and Wightlink in which a player had been iced while suspended was discussed and the LMC confirmed that the game was to be awarded 5-0 to Wightlink.

12. PLAYER TRANSFERS

S Nell raised the issue of player transfers and the manner in which teams would deal with players moving from one EPIHL team to another. The issue was one of what agreement should be in place to cover reimbursement of costs when an ITC card holder moved from one team to another. AF put forward his thoughts, differentiating between the situation where a team sacked a player and where a player walked away from a team.

KT said that he has always operated the situation of some re-imburement (based on length of time spent/to be spent with the respective teams) and he felt that this should be continued. It was agreed that this situation be continued.

13. CCPR – ADVANCE NOTICE ON NEW POINTS BASED SYSTEM FOR CONTROLLED MIGRATION

RL reported on the recent announcements by the CCPR (of which the EIHA was a member) about the Government's plans to reshape the procedures and responsibilities for people coming to the UK to play sports (as well as other reasons). He agreed to circulate a copy of the circular from CCPR to all teams for information.

14. APPROACHES TO PLAYERS BY TEAMS

Sheffield referred to alleged approaches to their players from another team and reminded all that a gentleman's agreement was in place that such activity would not occur during the playing season. It was agreed that this be recorded and implemented by all concerned.

15. EARLY PRODUCTION OF FIXTURES SCHEDULE

K Humphries (Guildford) outlined issues he faced in terms of ice time allocation and emphasised the need to see early production of a fixtures schedule for the EPIHL. All agreed that this should be a significant focus for the EPIHL.

16. BRACKNELL – CONTINUED EPIHL PRESENCE

H Howton (Milton Keynes) referred to the considerable recent web and press coverage of the apparent financial problems facing the Bracknell team and asked D Taylor what the likelihood was of the team completing the season. DT said that the team would definitely complete the season.

17. ITC DELAYS

H Howton (Milton Keynes) asked for clarification about the delays in getting ITC clearance from some countries and the rumours that this was the result of monies not having been paid to those countries by IHUK. AF said that the problems concerned invoices from some Associations two or three seasons ago and also complications existed over an issue where some Elite players had requested unlimited clearance (currently under discussion between IIHF, IHUK and the Elite League). No EPIHL players had been delayed other than where payments had not been made to IHUK and AF reminded all that the Chairman and the LMC had directed that no credit was to be given to any EIHA team for ITC card fees.

18. BENEFIT FUND

During the meeting suggestions had been made about the possibility of some form of benefit fund being created with the EPIHL designed to help and short-term financial problems faced by teams. Two options were raised: firstly, the increase of the League held bond from £500 to, say £2000-£3000 over a number of seasons; secondly, the ring-fencing of some surplus from the finals weekend to create such a fund. Teams were asked to consider these options and debate at a future meeting.

19. NEXT MEETING

KT suggested the next meeting could be fairly early in the New Year.