

SUSSEX COUNTY CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes of Selection Committee, Friday 11th December 2015.

1. Attended by Julian Mitchell (JM), Christine Jepson (CJ) and Mike Keeping (MK). Apologies from Roger Poulter and Andy Ryder.
2. Approve minutes of meeting 18th September and any matters arising.
 - a) Approved *nem con*.
 - b) CJ reported that matters regarding finding a replacement for MK were in hand and felt that an official approach was now in order. MK reiterated his preparedness to help out in any way necessary, including continued attendance of this committee as required until such time as his replacement was bedded in.
3. Review Tollemache performance.

The committee considered the Captain's Report and other feedback from the Tollemache. The team's above average performance was significantly better than last year's, which was heartening. The format of the team, five pairs and a npc was well received. It was also felt that the team gelled well, with an improved team spirit, for which much of the credit must go to the team npc, Neil Watts.

It was considered that Neil was an exemplary npc, not just at the event when anything that could be done to help the team, was done; but also with his pre-event emails which stimulated a good response from the team. It was felt that the SCCBA may be able to appoint Neil as a "Senior Sussex Coach" and he would have the Selection Committee's full backing for such an appointment.

JM added that he felt wholly different at this year's Tollemache, with the responsibility of captaincy lifted from his shoulders, a point reinforced by CJ.

In addition, the committee recognised that the SCCBA's funding has changed over the past few years and that in funding the Tollemache, this represents quite a hole in the county's annual budget at a time when funds are more limited. Accordingly, the Selection Committee will put forward a recommendation that in future the players be required to bear some of the cost of the event, as follows:

- SCCBA to pay the entry fee.
- SCCBA to defray all expenses incurred by the npc.
- SCCBA to pay an allowance of £50 per player, from which they would pay all other expenses (travel, accommodation, food, etc.).
- If accepted, that these recommendations be reviewed on a regular basis.

4. Review Metropolitan Cup performance.

CJ reported that the A team finished half-way in the event and performed solidly, with a stand-out result for David Dickson & Andy Ryder who cross-IMPed top across the field, with Nigel Urban & Neil Watts also playing well. CJ also reported that there were a lot of high-variance boards in the event, where sitting in the wrong direction might put you at the opponents' mercy: hence poor cross-IMPing comparisons were not necessarily a reflection of poor bridge.

The committee was pleased with the fielding of an East Sussex & West Sussex team in the B section this year, as more players wanting to represent the county were able to play. Of course the danger is that such a decision dissipates the strength of the teams fielded, and the two teams did turn in quite different results. The East Sussex finished a strong third, 34 VPs above average and significantly closer to the winning score than the fourth placed team were to them. Three pairs (Alan & James Hobden; Roger Poulter & Matt Smith; Tom Brogan & Mark Denny) cross-IMPed in the top eight of the field, with two of the other three pairs also cross-IMPing positively.

The West Sussex team did less well with a below average sixth place of nine. Harold & Cecily Linfield led the way with David Telfer & Michael Campbell also positive, which was very creditable given that they stepped up from the C team on the day.

The decision to promote Telfer/Campbell was taken on the day by the relevant team captains: however, this committee had already made provision for this very eventuality (as it happens, making the same choice). Clearly in future, the Selection Committee needs to ensure that such decisions are more widely known.

Overall Sussex teams did less well than in some previous years. It was felt that the overall strength of the event was significantly higher this year – possibly due to the event being held more centrally for other counties, away from Sussex. These results therefore may not simply be an indication of poorer performances, but also of the stronger opposition faced.

5. Any other business.

None.

6. Date of next meeting.

Friday 13th May 2016.