



Association des Club du Cricket du Sud Ouest.

*Siège social : Hôtel des Associations - 47160 DAMAZAN*

secretary@cricket-sw-france.org

[www.cricket-sw-france.org](http://www.cricket-sw-france.org)

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## Draft Minutes of AGM

held at Damazan on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024

### Present:

#### Committee, without vote:

- Peter Brown, president (“**PB**”),
- Peter Townsend, vice-president (“**PT**”)
- Mehul Dhorda, treasurer (“**MD**”)

#### Clubs, with voting rights:

- **Bordeaux-Giscours: Apologies** from Rupert Holderness (President). Proxy given to Saint Aulaye
- **Catus:** Peter Stirling (“**PS**”) (President).
- **Damazan: Apologies** from Gagan Singh. Mandate given to Damazan fixtures secretary, John Ayling (“**JA**”)
- **Eyliac:** Irfan Sheikh (“**IS**”) (President) (no vote on questions relating to competitions)
- **Eymet:** Andrew Cardle (“**AC**”) (President)
- **Montpellier:** Apologies from Gérard Cros (President). Proxy given to Toulouse.
- **Nîmes:** Pénélope Chauvin (“**PC**”) (President)
- **Saint Aulaye:** Peter Brown (“**PB**”) (President) (no vote on questions relating to competitions)
- **Toulouse:** Philippe Fermanel (“**PF**”) (President)

#### In attendance, without vote:

- Anne Stirling (“**AS**”), Minutes secretary, Catus
- Gary Stark (“**GS**”), Treasurer, Damazan
- Jeremy Bird (“**JB**”), VP, Eyliaç
- Scott MacKinlay (“**SM**”), Secretary, Eymet
- Rolf Zechner (“**RZ**”), Directeur Sportif, Nîmes

#### Apologies for Absence:

- Gérard Cros (“**GC**”), president. Proxy given to TCC.
- Hui Scheers (“**HS**”), ACCSO Secretary.

### 1. Agenda Item 1: Registration/proxies/Quorum:

Quorum was confirmed at 11h25, with 8 of the 9 member clubs represented by their president, by mandate to another member of club or by proxy given to another club.

Committee members PB, MD and PT were present.



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## 2. Agenda Item 2: Welcome:

PB welcomed those attending and advised that the attendees from Nîmes were delayed en route by the fog (they arrived at 12h00). **Noted.**

PB thanked Sheila Ayling for reserving the conference room and for dealing with the local restaurant for our lunch.

PB also advised that HS, our secretary, was working abroad and so was unable to attend but an audio recording of the proceedings was proposed such that he could later be made aware of the full content of the exchanges over and above the summary that would appear in the published minutes. **Noted and recording approved.**

## 3. Agenda Item 3: Apologies for absence:

PT informed the meeting that the presidents of B-GCC and MBCC apologised for their absence. Proxies given to SAC and TCC, respectively. **Noted.**

## 4. Agenda Item 4: Introductions:

PB invited attendees to introduce themselves and for each club briefly to describe its current situation and major preoccupations.

**Catus:** PS wryly recounted that the ground was briefly taken over by an encampment of evangelists. Fortunately, they left on the date specified and without damaging the carpet but with some damage to the outfield, since corrected. Thanks to internal fund-raising, and without any funding by the *mairie*, CCC have now ordered a new carpet, which will be in place for season 2025.

**Damazan:** JA said that DCC's finances are difficult and transport to matches a constant challenge. The *mairie* has announced their decision to sell off the entire site and DCC will be required to vacate at season-end 2025. The *mairie* has offered an alternative site, on the other side of the lake but is not prepared to offer any funding because DCC is not affiliated to the national body of reference, with membership of ASPTT not recognised.

**Eyliac:** The club is very pleased to have been able to install, from a standing-start, a new carpet in a new ground; and with significant aid from the *mairie*.

**Eymet:** AC said that the cost of playing cricket is unsustainable for ECC, despite the benevolence of the *mairie* and in-club fund-raising. Hence, ECC's tabling of questions about use of ACCSO's reserves, to be addressed later in the meeting.

**Montpellier:** No input received by TCC (proxy-holder).

**Nîmes:** Arrival delayed.

**Saint-Aulaye:** SAC also has installed a new carpet, in the short term to improve its offering to the club's junior activities and against the day when it returns to aCCSO competitions in its own right.

**Toulouse:** PF said that the club currently has 55 licenced members, mostly salaried of Indian origin. Thanks to this and to the *mairie*'s generosity in providing the ground rent-free and doing all the maintenance, TCC has a financial situation unlike that, apparently, of other clubs. Nominally, TCC could field 3 sides in ACCSO's competitions but the mnagement effort



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required to do so is too high. The club has a full off-season programme, with in-club matches and with winter indoor activities.

PB thanked the clubs for their input and proposed that, given the recurring themes of the state of club finances, the cost of travelling to matches and problems with their grounds, ACCSO should develop and circulate for review suggestions to assist clubs in their search for financing, including from within the multisports organisations to which clubs are now affiliated. **Approved unanimously. Action: ACCSO Committee.**

#### **5. Agenda Item 5: Draft Minutes of EGM 10 January 2024:**

Document pre-published to clubs and on the website. It was agreed that the question of a financial package for the clubs would be re-visited during the financial review later in the AGM. With no significant other matters arising. Approval of the Draft Minutes was proposed by Catus and seconded by Eymet. **Approved unanimously.**

#### **6. Agenda Item 6: President's report and review of Season 2024:**

Document pre-published to clubs and on the website. PB congratulated all clubs to the successful conclusion of a very demanding season. He expressed the thanks of Committee and the clubs for the continuing sponsorship of Blevins Franks and summarized the report. No questions were posed.

The President's Report 2024 was **noted** (not subject to vote).

**Arrival of NCC representatives.** All clubs now present or represented via proxies.

#### **7. Agenda Item 7: Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement 2024:**

Documents pre-published to clubs and on the website.

MD presented an overview of the 2024 situation, noting that, as in previous years, ACCSO's assets are in good shape, enabling clubs to be members and play in several competitions, with balls provided, at very low rates. He confirmed that 2024 is now set to be the last year of the current level of sponsorship from Blevins Franks (see next agenda item).

MD noted that, thanks to the incentives put in place, all TCC's home matches were umpired and scored by non-playing qualified members. Take-up in other clubs is regrettably less evident.

The kind donations from voluntary umpires may not be sustained, hence it is important to support the training and development of umpires. This is why Committee proposes to continue with the incentive scheme for the qualification of new umpires and for umpiring/scoring during ACCSO competitive matches.

AC queried the provisions for outstanding invoices and costs. MD explained that these were related to umpiring/scoring incentives owed by ACCSO as well as delayed registration/competition fees and expected payments for balls sold to clubs.

Approval of Treasurer's Report & Financial Statement 2024: On the basis that ACCSO will address the issues highlighted in debate, Proposed by Eymet; seconded by Catus.

**Approved unanimously.**

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### **8. Agenda Item 8: Budget proposal 2025:**

Document pre-published to clubs and on the website.

MD highlighted the reduction in the amount of the sponsorship received from Blevins Franks, down from €2000 to €1000.

MD further proposed that the umpiring and scoring incentives be maintained. However, to improve the match reporting, the incentives will only be disbursed upon reception of a completed match report from the scorer and/or umpire (to be determined). This would have the added advantage of providing documentation of the match officials/claims for incentives. A debate on appropriate use of ACCSO cash assets was initiated but was deferred to the 'Any Other Business' item on the agenda (below).

### **9. Agenda item 9: Secretary's Report:**

Document pre-published to clubs and on the website.

PB relayed HS's apologies for his absence (working abroad) and presented the key points. Other innovations in 2024 were the use – again optional – of live-streaming of matches (as at the Cup Final, for example), which had good audiences. HS provided talkie-walkies for umpire use at the T20 Finals, much appreciated by Gary Stark.

PB warmly praised HS's contributions during 2024. Attendees applauded.

### **VP's review of season 2024 and awards:**

Document pre-published to clubs and on the website.

PT added his congratulations to the finalists of the 3 competitions. After PT's review of the stand-out individual performances in 2024, RZ asked why there were no full-season "MVP" statistics. In response, PT said that the standard of match data reporting was quite simply inadequate across the season and for all clubs. He suggested that, if a given club has full season-long internal reporting, then PT's successor in 2025 would most likely be prepared to consider broadcasting the data.

For the second year in succession, and with sincere thanks and to applause, PT awarded medals for the now-familiar quartet of travelling umpires, who stood in nearly half of the season's matches – Gary Stark (Damazan) and Peter Stirling (Catus), in person; plus Adrian Evett (Saint-Aulaye) and Glyn Taylor (Eymet). They will be joined in 2025 by a new arrival, John Williams, who will be licenced at Eyliac. Unfortunately, another likely recruit has recently declared himself *forfait*, because of health reasons.

A "hero's" medal was awarded to Graham Coleman (ECC), who stood at the bowler's end for most of the 118.3 overs bowled in the T20 Qualifiers (N). Fact confirmed and medal endorsed by IS. PT emphasised that no single umpire should be put in such a position for lack of other qualified umpires; and hoped that this would not recur in future competitions.



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TCC excelled themselves in having several members complete and pass the MCC e-learning programme. One of those – Tithir Saha – who stood full-time at an away match also received a medal.

The reporting of match results in 2024 was overall very disappointing – worse, in fact, than in 2023. Again, some documented match results could not be accepted except by cross-reference to the relevant electronic scorebooks. Some clubs clearly had a problem with the production of Team Sheets, which begs the question of whether anybody ever checked that players-of-the-day were duly licenced.

Stand-out exceptions to this poor reporting were Ken Sutton (CCC) and Colin Goodall (ECC) and for that PT awarded one-off “Star Reporter” medals. It is noteworthy that, when these two gentlemen took a day off (as in the case of the ECC-CCC Cup Final), the Match Report was incomplete and there were no Team Sheets. QED.

PT repeated that, for the validity of results to be assured, the signatures of the 2 captains and 2 of whoever contributed to the umpiring of the match are all essential. This will continue to be the case where matches are scored electronically.

PT noted that only one-third of all League matches was played at full-length (40 over-per-innings), with over half being shortened because of late arrivals. The question of the length of League matches going forward is discussed as an AOB item (see below).

#### **AGM took note of all of the above.**

PT reviewed 3 specific instances of poor on-field discipline which came to light via witnesses. In each case. The situations were defused by the captains in 1 case and by the pool umpires in the other 2 situations – as prescribed by the Laws. As such, there was no requirement to make mention of the situations on the Match Reports and thus no disciplinary review by Committee was required.

Nevertheless, it has to be said that these are 3 situations more than should be occurring in our cricket. Furthermore, the fact that the captain of one of the sides was the cause of the incident should give us pause.

Given that AGM would be addressing the question of discipline, under AOB, PT urged clubs to take note and to work to improve on-field standards. **AGM took note.**



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### **10. Agenda item 10: Electronic scoring: 2025 state of play:**

The use of electronic scoring was well taken-up in certain clubs and it is hoped that in 2025 CricHeroes will more than fill the absence of CricHQ (bankrupt). PB emphasised that electronic scoring was not being mandated as a universal replacement for the scorebook.  
**AGM took note.**

### **11: Agenda item 11: Elections:**

- **President:** PT reminded AGM that the current President, Peter Brown, has come to the end of his mandate. He is willing to stand for re-election.

There being no other candidates, PT invited AGM to vote on PB's renewal. Damazan proposed; Eymet seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

- **Secretary:** PB reminded AGM that the current secretary, Hui Scheers, has come to the end of his mandate. He is willing to stand for re-election.

There being no other candidates, PB invited AGM to vote on Hui's renewal. Saint Aulaye proposed. Damazan seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

- **Vice-President:** PB reminded AGM that, at AGM 2023, Peter Townsend was willing to be nominated but only for a 1-year term. Hui Scheers is willing to stand for election as VP.

There being no other candidates, PB invited AGM to vote on Hui's election, for a 1-year term. Saint Aulaye proposed. Eymet seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

PB thanked PT for his contributions to ACCSO and its cricket for the past 14 years as member of Committee and marked the occasion with a bottle of wine. Attendees applauded.

For the record, Committee contact details are as now follows:

- o Peter Brown – President - [president@cricket-sw-france.org](mailto:president@cricket-sw-france.org)
- o Hui Scheers – Vice President - [VP@cricket-sw-france.org](mailto:VP@cricket-sw-france.org)
- o Mehul Dhorda – Treasurer - [treasurer@cricket-sw-france.org](mailto:treasurer@cricket-sw-france.org)
- o Hui Scheers – Secretary - [secretary@cricket-sw-france.org](mailto:secretary@cricket-sw-france.org)



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## **12. Agenda item 12: Sub-committees proposed for 2025:**

PB announced that Colin Goodall (ECC) had agreed to take over from PT the role of umpire co-ordinator. Working “downstream” but in conjunction with Secretary HS, he will manage the availability and allocation pool umpires to the scheduled matches; and work with clubs to manage other qualified umpires. As an experienced scorer in his own right, Colin will co-ordinate the scoring situation, again in conjunction with HS. **AGM took note, with approval.**

## **13. Agenda Item 13: Planning for 2025 competitions:**

**13.1.** PB invited clubs to indicate their current intentions for 2025. A summary follows:

**B-GCC:** Not entering a side.

**Catus:** One team in all 3 competitions, as in 2024.

**Damazan:** Ditto (subject to confirmation of access to Moulineau for the full season 2025).

**Action: DCC to confirm to Committee.**

**Eyliac:** One team in all 3 competitions, as in 2024.

**Eymet:** Ditto (but would warmly welcome a further team in Pool Norrh, in order to fill gaps in ECC’s competitive schedule). Committee took note.

**Montpellier:** Not specified as part of proxy given to TCC. Working assumption is 1 team in League and T20 as in 2024. **Action by Secretary: Verify with MBCC.**

**Nîmes:** One team in League and T20, as in 2024.

**Saint-Aulaye:** Not entering a side.

**Toulouse:** Two teams in all 3 competitions, as in 2024.

**Committee took note of all of the above.**

**13.2.** Proposition by Committee to reduce the League format to 35 overs-per-innings.

AGM consensus was to leave at 40 overs, with receiving clubs to review with their visitors, preferably, before match-day, and always in conjunction with the umpires allotted (the umpires always having the final decision on the ground, having regard to weather and the light. **AGM approved. Action by Secretary: Modify 2025 Tournament Regulations accordingly.**

## **14. Agenda Item 14: Any other business:**

### **14.1. Proposition by Committee to open on-line banking facility:**

MD informed AGM that ACCSO’s historical bank is not *performant* when it comes to remote banking (a drawback, given that he and likely future Treasurers will not be based locally. He therefore sought AGM’s approval to set up an online banking facility, to simplify future transactions, with the charges to be borne by ACCSO accounts.



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Proposed by Eymet; seconded by Toulouse. **Approved unanimously.**

#### **14.2 Pink balls - Proposition by Catus CC to adopt for all matches:**

PS informed AGM that CCC, with an all-round tree-line at Lac Vert, decided that only pink balls give the necessary visibility to the strikers. In passing, he added that, when the stream at the foot of the slope is high then bowling is from one end (the top end) only. And it is that end which has the most dense tree-line.

In discussion, AGM allowed that red balls could be used, but only where sight-screens were available and in use.

Proposed by Catus, with dispensation for use of red balls at grounds with sight-screens; seconded by Eyliac. Opposed 2; In favour 5. **Proposition approved.**

**Action by Secretary: Modify 2025 Tournament Regulations accordingly.**

#### **14.3. Helmets – Proposition by Nîmes CC to make mandatory for all batsmen:**

RZ informed AGM that his club has mandated the use of helmets for all batsmen, regardless of age and of the type of bowler in action. This decision, which has the full support of all NCC players, has played a major part in NCC's injury-free record in ACCSO matches and in friendly matches over the past 5 years, on all types of surface.

PT reminded AGM that current ACCSO regulations mandate the ECB Concussion Protocol for all players and that batting without a helmet only increases the chance that the Protocol be invoked. Regulations mandate helmets for U19 players, without exception and authorise umpires to question all incoming batsmen of the recommended use of a helmet.

In debate, GS added that there are certain non-fast bowlers whose deliveries have an equal habit of "spitting" up, not to mention the vagaries of a given pitch and the level of competence of a given batsman. He agreed with RZ that top-edges are equally an injury-risk, regardless of pace of bowler.

AC considered that such a mandatory regulation impinged upon the freedom of choice of an adult player.

Proposed by Nîmes; seconded by Catus. Abstentions 2; In favour 5. **Proposition approved.**

**Action by Secretary: Modify 2025 Tournament Regulations accordingly.**

#### **14.4. Pitch standards – Request by Nîmes CC for *dérogation* (waiver):**

RZ informed AGM that he has, rolled-up in storage, a tufted 15mm carpet (not a Flicx) which he would like to use to play NCC's home ACCSO matches. Laid on a grass outfield and





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secured, This would avoid the transport costs previously incurred in using Midi's ground (which in any event is currently unfit for play). It would be put at the disposal of MBCC for their own home ACCSO matches, with the same travel economies as for NCC.

Furthermore, it would provide a focus for a wider local public appreciation of cricket.

The carpet is long enough to cover from stump-line to stump-line and wide enough to accommodate the "imaginary" Wides line. PT pointed out that this means that the Return creases are off-mat and that bowler footfalls are not consistent. Equally a ball pitching outside off-stump is problematic from the point of view of potential Wides.

RZ proposes to instal the carpet such that batting takes place at one end only, leaving length behind the bowler for forward shots of 70m and in the process avoiding fielder movement between overs. Eylia commented that they have a restrained space (football pitch-size) but choose to instal in the centre (the situation at Sordelo also).

PT and JA both pointed out that bowler run-ups, even without spikes, would therefore soon damage the grass surface and require sawdusting during matches as required and due maintenance between matches. RZ confirmed that this was envisaged.

After ample debate and with questions still unasked/unanswered, PB proposed that RZ and HS should confer post-AGM, reach a clear conclusion and report back to Committee, perhaps for debate at an EGM via video-conference early in 2025. **AGM approved. Action by HS and RZ.**

#### **14.5. Discipline – Proposition by Eymet CC to introduce the equivalent of football's yellow & red cards:**

AC presented an overview of his proposition. In response, PT emphasised that The Laws (and thus ACCSO's competition regulations and disciplinary code) already provide for exactly these penalties). In every case, the umpire's first duty is to decide whether and how to defuse the situation, which was exactly what happened in the 3 specific incidents covered by PT in his season's review (see above).

After discussion, AGM concluded that it was not clear what benefit could derive from anything over and above the existing provisions.

ACCSO Umpires to be provided with an opportunity to send in a match report independently through the Umpire coordinator.

#### **14.6. Clubs' transport costs – Proposition by Eymet CC for ACCSO funds to be used to offset costs incurred by member Clubs:**

AC highlighted the financial difficulties of clubs and suggested that, given the healthy financial situation of ACCSO, a way of returning funds to ACCSO members clubs should be found. This could be by waiving registration and competition fees for the 2025 season or by offering some subsidies to clubs to offset costs for travel to



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matches. MD replied it was his belief that clubs who are unable to bear the costs of participation should not participate in ACCSO competitions. Though the ACCSO account balance is indeed healthy, given the uncertainty around sponsorship and sustainability of umpiring, it would be unwise to draw on those funds as they would allow the competitions to continue for 2-3 years even without sponsorship and donations from umpires. In the absence of sponsorships, ACCSO and its member clubs will be forced to increase registration and competition fees to keep going. It was further explained that the situation when such subsidies were last made available was quite different. At that time, there were fewer teams participating in the competitions due to COVID19-related restrictions which translated to much longer distances travelled for away matches. These additional costs were offset with mileage-based/pro rata subsidies offered to Clubs.

JB proposed that projected costs are estimated and presented to the clubs at a later date.

**AGM noted and agreed** to defer to a proposed future EGM to be held in February 2025 to discuss competitions.

**15. Agenda Item 15: Close:**

PB thanked all for attending and closed the AGM at 17h250.

**Published by ACCSO Secretary on behalf of Committee**