

ASSOCIATION DES CLUBS DE CRICKET DU SUD OUEST

Siège social : Hôtel des Associations - 47160 DAMAZAN



Minutes of AGM held at Damazan on 1st November 2008

Meeting started at 14:10 with Andy CRAWFORD, President, in Chair.

Present :

Outgoing Committee: Andy Crawford ("AC"), Stephen Harrison ("SH"), Peter Townsend ("PT").

France Cricket : Eddie Cannon ("EC"), Secretary-General.

Angoulême: Joe Larter (President).

Armagnac-Bigorre: Ray Short (Treasurer, voting) & Chris Redhead (Fixtures Secretary).

Bordeaux: Rupert Holderness (President).

Catus: Ian Philby (President, voting) & Ken Sutton (Secretary).

Damazan : Sheila Ayling (President).

Eymet: David Horlock (Fixtures Secretary) & Clin Bond (Social Secretary, voting).

Midi: Proxy given to Tarn.

St. Aulaye : Stephen Harrison (President, voting) & Wynford Hicks (Fixtures Secretary).

Tarn: Andy Crawford (President) & Martin Leake (Treasurer, voting)

Toulouse: Andy Gordon (Secretary, voting) & Derek Blackham (Treasurer).

Agenda Item 1 : Quorum: Verified (9/11 present: in excess of the two-thirds attendance required by 1992 Constitution).

Agenda Item 2 : Welcome by AC: And best wishes to John Ayling who returned home from hospital that very morning.

Agenda Item 3 : Apologies : Colin Trickett (Midi); Jan Curzons (Noé-Gascogne).

Agenda Item 4 : Attendee introductions.

Agenda Item 5 : Minutes of AGM2007 : Approved as published on Web site. Reading not required. Approval proposed by Bordeaux; seconded by Eymet. Signed and filed.

Agenda Item 6 :President's report: Accepted as published on Web site. No matters arising.

Agenda Item 7 : Treasurer's report: Reviewed and approved as published on Web site.

In discussion, led by SH:

- SH thanked those who give freely of their time and facilities in support of what ACCSO does.

Endorsed by the meeting, as was the thanks offered by SH to umpires who either make no claim or who take their due in the form of tax certificates.

- Meeting reviewed Club annual membership fee (€5). SH reminded members that ACCSO is in business to serve the interests of member-clubs and that a “going rate” fee to cover major items could rise to “hundreds of euros”... Meeting agreed (unsurprisingly?) to maintain today’s fee. Approval proposed by Eymet; seconded by Bordeaux.

Agenda Item 8 : Draft Budget 2009 : Reviewed and approved as published on Web site.

In discussion, led by SH:

- The Budget indicates clearly the extent to which cricket as a whole within the ACCSO territory benefits from the sponsorship by Siddalls. Meeting recorded its appreciation of Siddalls’ continuing and valuable support.

- Rupert Holderness, in his capacity as “Mr Siddalls”, reviewed his company’s sponsorship situation; outlined some of the ways in which clubs could reciprocate (literature, mentions on Club Web sites, banners, etc.); and confirmed that the Budget provision for 2009 looks solid.

- The Budget line item for a junior match against the S-E reflects the desire on the part of the S-E to separate the junior event from that of the seniors. Hence the proposition - approved in principle – for a junior week-end in May.

- Meeting agreed that the ideal location for any future SW-SE match is Midi, and decided to suggest to the S-E that we do not hold the senior fixture in 2009, reviewing again for the 2010 season when the improvements to the Midi ground have been completed.

Secretary’s note post-meeting: The S-E have been so informed.

Approval proposed by Armagnac; Seconded by Bordeaux.

Agenda Item 10 : Umpires Report: As published on Web site.

In discussion, led by SH:

10.1. The shortage of umpires is becoming critical: it is no longer reasonable to ask today’s limited set of volunteers to travel so widely, despite expense refund/tax credits.

A “penalty” system, as in the Ile-de-France, was not approved: the S-W is still in better shape than “Paris” and members understand the need to preserve what is good here.

Meeting agreed that clubs should make every effort to bolster the numbers; to this end, a Level 1 course will be scheduled for March 2009. Candidates will be actively sought!

Wynfod Hicks thought that entry to ACCSO by a new club should be dependent upon its commitment to add at least one qualified umpire to the pool. Notion sympathetically received.

Meeting also agreed that entry to the 2010 League/Cup programmes will be conditional upon clubs’ having at least one qualified umpire “on the books” and available for scheduling.

10.2. Pitch quality: several concerns had been expressed during the 2008 season.

Armagnac pointed out that FC’s willingness to supply Flicx pitches does not sit well with any move to “outlaw” them. “Flicx Clubs” restated their local environmental issues and emphasised the need to allow a club to grow: a point which finds an echo in the history of the development of the longer-established “northern” clubs.

Catus emphasised the paramount importance of safety, whereupon the meeting agreed that final rounds of competitions should be played on “carpets”.

The meeting reviewed some notions for “quality control” (a touring panel of wise men; umpires to “score” pitches as part of a match report) but none of these was approved.

Meeting agreed that umpires must remain the sole arbiters of safety and also continue to have the ability to make decisions on deliveries according to on-the-day circumstances.

Meeting unanimously approved a motion of thanks to SH for all his work in the umpiring world.

Agenda Item 9 : Youth Cricket: AC reviewed the matches of 2009.

Meeting agreed that the “North-South” match in between the two Siddalls Cup semi-finals in August was a great success and that it should be repeated in 2009.

Wynford Hicks urged, to general approval, that the every effort should be made to bring together the maximum number of SW juniors in advance of the SW-SE game: for trials, selection and to provide another match opportunity. Noted by Committee.

SH reminded the meeting of FC’s obligations under the terms of the ICC Development Plan, for 16 junior sides across the country. We will need to draw conclusions from clubs’ contacts with schools, with a focus on “L’anglais par le cricket”.

Agenda Item 11 : Matches in 2009

Summary analyses of club feed-back to the recent ACCSO questionnaire on this subject were distributed by PT and were used as baseline for a discussion, led by AC.

Copies of these summaries (which include interesting narratives not fully covered at the AGM) are available from PT, on request.

11.1. League

- Option 1 (friendlies-only): **Damazan** are alone in taking this route.
- Option 3 (20/20 National League): no takers; Tarn and Toulouse strongly opposed.
- Option 4 (ACCSO-defined “league”): **A-BCC’s** clear-cut preference. Catus and Toulouse would go down this path IF all else failed. Committee conclusion: No mandate to proceed further.

- Option 2: National League, plus or minus as in 2008:

- Noé’s declared intention to participate is subject to Club AGM in November.
- Apart from Damazan and A-BCC, the other **8 clubs confirmed their participation.**

PT asked Ray Short if A-BCC wished to review its strategy in the light of these conclusions: A-BCC will meet to review by mid-November.

Meeting agreed to allow A-BCC and N-G to review in-club and report back to ACCSO by end-November. After that date, fixtures planning must and will proceed.

Secretary’s note post-meeting: the presidents of A-BCC and Noé have been informed that they have until end-November to confirm whether or not they will participate.

- **League start & finish dates:** Consensus for start in May and finish mid-July (if not by end-June), subject to pool sizes.

EC confirmed that country-wide final would be September, as in 2008.

- **Home/away fixtures:** Consensus for pairs of home/away matches, as in 2008.
- **Travel times:** Clearly becoming an important factor in terms of cost.

Acceptable travel time ranges between 2 and 3.5 hours each way: median 2.5.

Interesting option of use of neutral half-way houses (as per Catus-Angoulême game, played at Eymet). -

- **Tolerance of away games:** Median = 4, yielding a pool size of 5, as in 2008...

Meeting reviewed the above conclusions, as inputs to fixture planning stage to come.

- Meeting agreed that “double headers” should be avoided, where at all possible.
- Meeting agreed that half-way houses should be accepted, even encouraged.
- Wynford Hicks reminded members that even-numbered pools make for shorter elapsed periods, with fewer “dead” dates. However, we shall not know until end-November whether we will have 8, 9 or 10 participants. Scenarios of 8 (4+4, with Catus in “south”) and 10 (5+5, with Catus in “north”) as in 2008) are clear-cut; but a scenario of 9 will need some analysis in order to arrive at reasonable journey times.

- **League fixture list:** Meeting accepted offers by St Aulaye and Tououse to manage the build of the fixture list for their respective pools, once the decisions of Armagnac and Noé are known. This work will try, as in 2008, to reduce travelling (by scheduling two matches over a week-end, by interacting with the Cup programme, etc.); and clubs should be allowed to look for neutral-ground/half-way house locations.

PT is Committee contact and arbiter.

- **Overs per innings/bowler:** Majority of clubs wanted to retain 2008 numbers: 40 per innings and 8 per bowler. Action by SH and PT when rules for 2009 come to be drawn up.

- **Commitment to nation-wide final phase:** Seven clubs expressed willingness. St Aulaye added a condition: if in the south-west. General agreement that ACCSO should bid for the final, as in 2008: Action by PT.

- **Lower age limits:** Five of the 8 clubs replying were ready to accept the 2008 age thresholds; 1 looked for a lower limit of 12; and 2 no age restrictions at all. This set of responses prompted a lively exchange of views. Conclusion: no basis for an approach to the FFBS for a further concession (after the "age-15" concession started up in 2008).

- **Licences for regular (full- or part-season players) :** Two clubs came out against licences of any level; but the other 6 clubs replying expressed willingness to take out competitive licences. Conclusion: no action.

- **"Drop-in" players (family, friends, tourists) in League/Cup:** responses split between clubs interested in using "Cartes de Batte" and clubs who want no licence cover. SH explained that the "Cartes de Batte" (soon to be re-launched?) are intended for interest-generation events rather than match-use; and he warned presidents against exposures. PT will record ACCSO clubs' views with the FC competitions manager and report back on reaction: Action by PT.

- Fielding players in League matches from other clubs: 5 of the 6 clubs replying look for more flexibility here. PT will raise the possibility of a SW exception to the national league rules: Action by PT.

- Player qualification for final phases: A narrow majority of clubs replying (4 out of 7) would prefer to see no restrictions placed on who should be able to play in the semi-final (Pool C vs Pool D) and in the final vs "Paris". PT will raise the possibility of a SW exception to the national league rules: Action by PT.

11.2. Siddalls Cup 2009:

- Apart from Damazan, all clubs have signalled their intention to participate, although Noé's participation is subject to Club AGM in November. The draw will therefore take place in the first week of December. Action by Wynford Hicks, supervised by PT.

- Rupert Holderness, as sponsor

- is happy with Sunday 30th August for the final

- is looking for bids from clubs (other than Bordeaux) to host the final.

The security of players and clients is important, as is the standard of logistics and service: clubs should not underestimate the workload involved in meeting these requirements.

Action required: Clubs interested in bidding for the final to register with Andy Crawford without delay.

- Meeting agreed

- to seed the draw in order to provide two north-south semi-finals, as in 2008.

- to hold both semi-finals at a neutral location over a single week-end, as in 2008.

- Meeting accepted Sheila Ayling's offer of Damazan as host site for the two semi-finals.

11.3. National Indoor competition

- EC confirmed that there will be such a competition in 2009. A decision on location of the finals will be made in March 2009.
 - For the regional qualifying round, meeting noted that AC and Wynford Hicks will action bookings at Lisle and St Astier, respectively.
- Action required: Clubs wishing to play in qualifying round to contact Wynford or Andy without delay.

11.4. SW-SE games:

- Senior game to be put on hold (see Item 8, above). Action by Committee.
- Meeting confirmed continuation of Junior game, for mid-May (see also idea for SW squad pre-match activity in Item 9, above). Action by Committee.

11.5. Junior SW Challenge : Approved (see Item 9, above).

11.6. Other matches : AC reported an approach by David Bordes for a fixture between a SW XI and a French national side, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of EdF (as in "Equipe de France").
Meeting agreed that this might be interesting, especially in light of Damazan's 20th celebrations; but also agreed that a September slot would be preferable, in order not to interfere with regional League and Cup commitments. Noted by Committee.

Agenda Item 12 : ACCSO Constitution

AC reminded the meeting that this project was held over from AGM 2007 and that it was now time to finalise it, all final-draft documents having been available for review via the Web site since 3rd October. PT explained that the core of last year's document had been retained, but divided into two documents, aligned with the models of France Cricket and the FFBS:

- a Constitution proper (principles which should change very little over time); and
- a set of rules and regulations which can be modified much more easily as the need arises (and without having to trouble the French authorities).

Meeting confirmed acceptance of this strategy and approved the Constitution document dated 3rd October 2008. Proposed by Bordeaux; seconded by Angoulême.

One major question remained to be tested with the AGM: that of membership of the FFBS being a prerequisite for club-membership of ACCSO; for an individual's eligibility for election to ACCSO Committee, etc. PT highlighted those areas of the draft Regulations document which related to this.
Meeting agreed that a club-in-formation not yet affiliated to the FFBS should normally be eligible to become a member of ACCSO and benefit from such membership.

Meeting agreed that an existing ACCSO member-club which gives up FFBS affiliation should normally be able to remain an ACCSO member-club.

Meeting agreed to consequential wording changes relating to FFBS membership.

EC noted that the "one-club-one-vote" rule would put ACCSO at odds with France Cricket's rules; and would perhaps be against the law. PT replied that he had looked hard for such a law and failed to find it; and that if the day came when it was necessary to change to a voting right based on numbers of licence-holders, then such a change could quickly be made to the regulations.

Meeting agreed a minor amendment proposed by Bordeaux: to change "The official working language..." to "The working language..." (in paragraph 10 of the Regulations).

Meeting agreed to approve the draft Regulations (Règlement Intérieur), as modified at meeting.

Proposed by Bordeaux; seconded by St Aulaye (by Stephen Harrison as representative of St Aulaye rather than as Committee member).

PT will now proceed to make the agreed modifications to both language-formats and then have the French documents validated and signed prior to lodging with the sous-préfecture at Nèrac.

Secretary's Note post-meeting:

- Details of changes made to both documents as a result of meeting's decision on FFBS prerequisites are contained in a document, available on request.
- All final-form documents will be posted to the ACCSO Web site.

Agenda Item 13 : Election of Officers:

This election was conducted according to ACCSO's newly-adopted Constitution and Internal Regulations. Thus, officers are now elected for two-year terms, with a staggering of terms to ensure continuity.

Meeting approved a motion by AC: the posts of president and secretary to be filled for a 2-year period starting now; treasurer and vice-president to be elected for one year ahead of a 2-year term as from the next AGM.

This pairing will be written into the Internal Regulations: Action by PT.

All current officers had expressed their willingness to be nominated for re-election.

There being no other nominations, meeting voted unanimously to re-elect AC, SH and PT.

Proposed by Bordeaux; seconded by Catus.

Meeting endorsed an expression of thanks by Bordeaux to the outgoing Committee.

Agenda Item 14 : France Cricket

AC introduced EC: Eddie Cannon, Vice-President and Secretary-General of France Cricket.

EC gave a short overview of France cricket's history:

- from its earlier status as an Affiliate Country, and within the Fédération;
- through the acquisition of Associate Country status;
- a spell outside the Fédération followed by a return to the fold, followed by an agreement just under 4 years ago which restored a degree of independence to France Cricket.

This agreement has been re-negotiated, but not yet signed. When signed it will give France Cricket more control over the setting of licence fees (although the mechanics will still be handled by the FFBS).

This should ensure that licence fees will remain unchanged for us in 2009.

Secretary's note post-meeting: Gilles Bizot of the FFBS confirmed, on 21st November, that 2009 licence fees remain unchanged from 2008.

Under the new agreement the FFBS remains in charge of rules for young players, and there is no change in this area.

To become 100% independent and to be recognised as such by the French government will require the number of cricket licences to pass the 5,000 mark. The current number is just under 1,000.

Although there are other people playing cricket without licences elsewhere in France it would still be a major challenge even if they all decided overnight to take out licences.

EC reminded the meeting of the challenges that face France as an Associate Country, under the 2009 ICC funding régime, starting 1.1.09. These challenges have been documented to clubs in an ACCSO paper that was reviewed by France Cricket.

Even allowing for the higher grant levels that will come to an Associate Country, France Cricket's budget for 2009 is not yet balanced and is pending.

It's true that being retrograded to Affiliate status takes away both the possibility of higher grants and the obligations that go with them; but today's existing grant also all but disappears.

More positively, EC expressed himself "totally happy" with what we do here in the SW and with the FC-ACCSO relationship.

All 3 current representatives of the SW on “the Board” of France Cricket step down in March 2009. EC hoped that other SW people would put themselves up for election and continue to represent the interests of the region at the highest level.

AC thanked EC for his frank and clear statement of the challenges facing France Cricket.

Agenda Item 15 : ACCSO Web site:

- PT expressed thanks for kind words of encouragement and continues to welcome suggestions from members for change, extensions, improvements.

Agenda Item 16 : Any other business:

- No items were put forward by members ahead of/during the meeting.

- AC mentioned an imminent (23/24 November) cricketing event in Mâcon to coincide with the release of this year’s Beaujolais Nouveau. No takers !

Meeting closed at 18:26, with thanks to Sheila Ayling for tea and coffee.

Prepared by ACCSO Secretary Peter Townsend.

Approved for distribution by ACCSO President Andy Crawford.

21st November 2008.

Distribution:

1. Attendees
2. Club presidents not present (Richard Law of A-BCC; Martin Smith of Eymet; Colin Trickett of Midi; Jan Curzons of Noé; Jeff Burrridge of Toulouse).
3. ACCSO Web site.