

**FIR Council Meeting, World Championships, Leipzig, 24. November 2019, 08:45-12:00**

**Council Members present:**

Anna-Klara Ahlmer (AK), Dan Busby (DB), Amke Fischer (AF), Kresten Hougaard (KH),  
Graham King (GK), Frank Kleiber (FB), Poku Salo (PS), Duncan Stahl (DS)

**Council Members excused:**

Kirsten Kaptein (KK), Hans Vandaele (HVD), Marcel Weigl (MW)

**Agenda:**

1. Financial Report
2. Rankings change from 2020 onwards - VOTE
3. FIR Climate Change Policy - VOTE
4. Replacement for Hans Vandaele as FIR Rules Officer
5. Review of FIR marketing (social media 7 website stats etc.) & plan for next 12 months
6. Report about player retention
7. Report on trial use of Rankedin
8. Review of Tournament Player Surveys and plan for next 12 months

DS opened the meeting at 08:45 and welcomed all present. He acknowledged the difficulties in finding a good time for everyone, stating he might in future try to hold Council Meetings differently, such as the night before the tournament starts, with FIR funding the cost of the overnight hotel room<sup>1</sup>.

**1. Financial Report**

GK presented the financials, pointing out that a small surplus is forecast for 2019, and that this will be managed to reduce any possible tax liability<sup>2</sup>.

The income is generated from:

- Player Licences 32%
- TSF 25%
- MCF 28%
- Membership fees 13%
- Other 2%

GK commented on the main differences where the forecast will exceed the budget:

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<sup>1</sup> Though this also comes with Council Member availability issues

<sup>2</sup> The Swiss (Zurich) Tax Office rejected the FIR application for tax-free status, citing a rule requiring membership of the IOC or its Swiss-domiciled sub-associations

- Income from Marketing Contribution Fund by ca. 30%
- Marketing expenses by ca 5%
- Cost of refunding Tournament Directors with EUR 50 per Council Member by ca 40%

## 2. Rankings Change Proposal

DB summarised his analysis of the current rankings system and his proposal for its improvement:

- The total number of tournaments over the previous 24 months counting towards World Ranking to be reduced from 12 to 10, to favour rewarding player tournament performance over participation
- The number of Challenger status tournaments which must be included in the 10 counting towards ranking to be kept at 2, to continue to promote new tournaments and new countries. GK commented that 4 of the first 5 tournaments in 2020 are Challenger status and pointed out that results from more Challenger tournaments can still count towards World Ranking points, if they earn more points than results in other tournament categories
- The maximum number of World Championships which count towards World Ranking Points to be reduced from 2 to 1, to lend more weight to the contribution from IWT's
- The maximum number of SWT's to be reduced from 4 to 3, to reflect the reduced number of SWT's being held

DB proposed that if this change is approved, there should be a 2-year moratorium on any further change to the FIR World Ranking systems.

All agreed that a World Ranking is particularly difficult for our sport and there is no model which fits all cases, yet that this "tweak" is an improvement. The proposal was unanimously approved.

Next steps:

GK will organise with TournamentSoftware to have it implemented from 1.1.2020 onwards.

DS will organise a FIR article to be published.

GK will update and publish the FIR Ranking Regulations.

## 3. FIR Climate Change Policy

DS summarised the initiative, proposed by James Pope and Cédric Junillon, both professionally active in the field of climate science, which had already been discussed at the previous Council Meeting. The goal is to enable FIR to be more proactive in the field of environmental protection, thereby making attracting sponsorship easier. DS stressed, FIR is not saying that players should not travel to tournaments, but that where possible it should be done in as eco-friendly way as possible. Also, Tournament Directors will be encouraged to make their tournaments greener. The full version of the proposal, attached to these minutes, was distributed with the meeting invitation, and again at the meeting.

The proposal was unanimously approved.

## 4. Replacement for Hans Vandaele as FIR Rules Officer

Hans Vandaele has submitted his resignation from the FIR Council. The FIR statutes determine that his recognition is valid from the date when either a replacement member has elected by the AGM, or the Council has found a replacement member and he/she has accepted. The next Council elections will take place when their period in office expires, 3 years after the founding assembly took place in February 2019.

Effectively, GK will continue to write all the regulations revisions, and the Delegate team put into place for the 2019 FIR World Tour will continue to perform most of the interpretation of them when running FIR tournaments. The FIR President & Vice-President will take over this function ad interim in the seldom cases when a Rules Officer decision is required.

Next steps:

If no replacement comes forward or can be found in the near future, DS will publish the open position to attract candidates.

## 5. **FIR Marketing Review**

Most media activity is performed by Sam Barker, acting as a paid FIR Media Officer, who is tasked with working 8-10 hours per week on the FIR website, facebook, Instagram and twitter accounts, surveys, mailings etc. Paid social media campaigns and advertising are planned for the near future. The agreement allows him to play in 1 class at a tournament, to allow him enough time for media coverage, though due to injury, this has not yet happened. The meeting unanimously expressed their agreement that Sam is doing a great job.

DS stated that this function is crucial for FIR and he planned to retain Sam to continue this marketing coverage. DS added that Sam found it significantly easier when provided with his own desk for the tournament, such as in Leipzig, and he will try to incentivise Tournament Directors to enable this.

GK asked how the tournaments for coverage were selected. DS stated that the plan is to cover all WC & SWT tournaments, and IWT / CHA tournaments when it fits in with Sam's availability. GK suggested that his media coverage should be distributed fairly amongst all IWT/CHA tournaments where possible, with none being covered two years running when others had not yet received coverage. DS stated that the goal is to build up a Media Team around Sam to enable this.

DS summarised the statistics of a vast increase in the number of [www.racketlon.net](http://www.racketlon.net) visits as a result of Sam's marketing.

KH suggested passing Sam's contact details to the Tournament Directors.

DS has tasked a Social Media Agency to perform an analysis of where the marketing is most successful and to provide a report, suggesting where to focus activity for 2020.

GK stressed the importance of keeping the objectives of the marketing activities firmly in sight and that concrete goals which can be measured numerically (such as number of players, number or size of tournaments, distribution of FIR members, participation of National Teams at the World Championships etc) need to be defined.

Next steps:

DS to provide some concrete racketlon.net statistics to show the results of Sam's marketing activities  
DS to provide marketing objectives and metrics at the next FIR AGM.

KH to ask TD's to provide Sam with a workspace.

KH to pass Sam's contact details to all TD's.

## 6. **Player Retention**

Beni Gränicher has performed tournament analysis for the 2019 World Tour. His findings are attached. The main finding was that new players are significantly more likely to be retained to Racketlon if they play a second tournament within 3 months.

DS stated that new player support needs to be strengthened.

Next steps:

DS will organise an email to the local Racketlon federation listing the new players at a tournament, to encourage their continued local activity. GK commented that RISA (India) had reminded him in Leipzig of their wish for advance information of any new Indian players at a tournament, to enable them to verify their authenticity (rather than using the tournament merely to obtain a visa); and also their concern of the risk of serious issues with the authorities or national sports federations, should locally unknown Indian players be allowed to play internationally.

DS will organise an email to all new players and arrange for them to meet on the first day of the tournament with an experienced FIR player who can serve as their mentor throughout the tournament. DS hopes this will encourage contact amongst the new players and that they will be more likely to play more often or travel to tournaments together.

## 7. **RankedIn**

GK summarised the attempt to cover the 2019 Swedish Open MA & WA classes using RankedIn, commenting that some features such as digital referees and live scoring are very attractive, but need to be adapted to Racketlon scoring for a serious trial.

GK commented that any full-scale implementation of RankedIn would require an enormous effort. Given the crucial importance of this function, the extent of his other FIR activities is a major concern in giving this enough priority.

Next steps:

GK to review his other FIR tasks and availability to allow him to complete this task

## 8. **Tournament Surveys**

DS summarised the results of the tournament survey, carried out by 563 participating players at 13 tournaments. Slides of the full presentation are attached.

## 8. **AOB**

DB led a discussion on a player's attempted participation in the wrong age class at the World Championships. As this item was not on the published agenda, a vote to ban the player for a limited period was not allowed at the Council Meeting, but instead was postponed to a subsequent email procedure. Due to the uncertainty around the issue, the Council then voted as below (the result recorded here for completeness):

- Ban – 4 votes
- No ban – 5 votes
- Abstain – 2 votes

Next steps:

GK to inform the player and issue a formal warning.

ERU was briefly discussed to bring all Council Members to the same level of understanding.

KH presented several suggested changes to the rules:

- Rules of Racketlon:
- “Bleeding” rule harmonisation amongst all 4 sports
- Handling of “contributed injury”
- Handling of a “conduct warning” in squash
- Players and Draws Regulations:
- Mandatory eye protection for squash in all junior classes

Next steps:

GK to formalise into a rule revision proposal to the Council, and subsequently (for changes to the Rules of Racketlon) to the next AGM

*Minutes by GK and approved by DS*