

MINUTES FIR AGM 2019

Saturday 12th September 2020, 14:30 – 10:30

Online ZOOM meeting

Chair: FIR Executive President Duncan Stahl

Minutes: FIR Vice-President Graham King

20 Countries present or delegated their voting power with a total of 50 votes:

1. Australia (1), Leigh Sands
2. Austria (5), Marcel Weigl
3. Afghanistan (1), votes to Austria
4. Belgium (3), Geert Blommaert
5. Canada (1), votes to USA
6. Czech Republic (3), Svatopluk Rejthar
7. Denmark (3), Thomas Ostenfeld
8. Finland (3), Poku Salo
9. Germany (6), Frank Kleiber
10. Great Britain (5), Dan Busby
11. India (1), K.K. Cheema
12. Latvia (2), Arturs Zaicevs
13. Luxembourg (1), Jan Michalek
14. Malta (1), votes to GB
15. Netherlands (1), Guus van de Burgt
16. Romania (1), Radu Ionescu
17. Slovakia (1), votes to Czech Republic
18. Sweden (5), Markus Borg
19. Switzerland (5), Graham King
20. USA (1), Pat Moran

50 out of 70 possible votes were present at the AGM, which is 71 % of the total number of votes and more than 50% needed for quorum. The AGM was thus able to take final decisions on all points on the Agenda. For the normal majority (50%) a minimum of 26 votes were needed. For the qualified majority (66.67%) a minimum of 34 votes were needed.

15 Countries not present with a total of 20 votes

1. Croatia (1)
2. Estonia (1)
3. France (6)
4. Greece (1)
5. Hong Kong (1)
6. Hungary (1)
7. Israel (1)
8. New Zealand (1)
9. Poland (1)
10. Russia (1)
11. Singapore (1)

12. South Africa (1)
13. Spain (1)
14. Thailand (1)
15. Turkey (1)

Non-voting attendees

1. Kirsten Kaptein (NED, FIR Council)
2. Joachim Gersdorf (GER, Auditor, excused)
3. Patrik Wartia (SWE, Auditor, excused)

Final Agenda

- 1) Welcome note members
- 2) Confirmation of minutes of Founding Assembly 2019 (published on www.racketlon.net)
- 3) Confirmation of final 2019 Financials, Amke Fischer (Treasurer)
- 4) Auditor's Report for 2019 Financials (Joachim Gersdorf & Patrick Wartia)
- 5) President Report, Duncan Stahl
- 6) Discharge of outgoing Council Members:
 - Hans Van Daele (BEL)
 - Frank Kleiber (GER)
 Discharge of Executive President and Council Members remaining in office:
 - Duncan Stahl (GBR)
 - Anna-Klara Ahlmer (SWE)
 - Dan Busby (GBR)
 - Amke Fischer (GER)
 - Kresten Hougaard (DEN)
 - Kirsten Kaptein (NED)
 - Graham King (SUI)
 - Poku Salo (FIN)
 - Marcel Weigl (AUT)
- 7) Discharge of Patrick Wartia as Auditor and vote to accept Patrick Bürgi as his replacement
- 8) New FIR members, Racketlon Luxembourg, Spanish Association of Racketlon, Thailand Racketlon Association, Racketlon UNION Afghanistan
- 9) FIR and Council; vision for the future: Duncan Stahl
- 10) Finance preview, 2020 and 2021 Forecast, Duncan Stahl/Amke Fischer
- 11) Vote on new financial measures to re-build FIR reserves, Duncan Stahl
- 12) Change to Rules of Racketlon, Kresten Hougaard
 - harmonisation of the handling of conduct warnings, injury, and bleeding timeout
- 13) Change to Rules of Racketlon, Graham King
 - Round Robin group play to be stopped on reaching a result, rather than always being played to completion, with possible "Gummiarm Playoff" (new) to decide final positions
- 14) Change to Statutes, Duncan Stahl
 - additional vote at AGM for smaller countries contesting in the FIR National Team Event
 - technical change to allow General Assemblies (AGM/EGM) to be held remotely in the future, after the special Swiss laws introduced for the Coronavirus epidemic have lapsed
- 15) Presentation of new Racketlon Youth Concept - joint initiative between FIR and ERU
- 16) Place and Date of next AGM
- 17) Any other business

1) Welcome note, members (Duncan Stahl)

FIR President Duncan Stahl opened the AGM at 14:00, took over as chair, welcomed all representatives, announced FIR Vice President Graham King as meeting secretary to take the minutes, and presented the agenda. Graham King confirmed the attendees and declared that the 50% quorum necessary for the AGM to take decisions had been reached.

2) Confirmation of Minutes of the Founding Assembly in February 2019

The minutes of the Founding Assembly held on Saturday 2nd February 2019 at the Vienna Sporthotel, 1030 Vienna, Austria, published on www.racketlon.net, were unanimously approved by the AGM.

3) 2019 Financials

Treasurer Amke Fischer presented the Financial report for 2019, commenting that they had been approved by the FIR auditors.

Income Statement (PnL) 2019:

• Income	EUR	44'944	Budget EUR	42'945
• Expenses	EUR	43'815	Budget EUR	42'251
• Surplus	EUR	1'129	Budget EUR	1'694

Balance Sheet 2019:

• Retained earnings 2.2.2019	EUR	13'777
• Surplus	EUR	1'129
• Own Capital 31.12.2019	EUR	14'906

The 2019 Financials were unanimously approved by the AGM.

4) Auditors' Report

Amke Fischer read out the FIR Auditors' Report, as both Auditors were unable to attend. The auditors' report praised FIR for the well organised and easy-to-understand bookkeeping. Amke Fischer pointed out that the auditors had access to all FIR bookkeeping information, which is stored in the FIR DropBox.

The 2019 Auditors' Report was unanimously approved by the AGM.

5) Discharge of Council Members

Due to a technical issue, Duncan Stahl was temporarily unable to stay logged in at the AGM, so Graham King took over as Chair and rescheduled the agenda items requiring Duncan Stahl's attendance till later.

Graham King stated that both Hans Van Daele and (very recently) Frank Kleiber had resigned from the FIR Council due to the pressures of their professional careers, which had increased the demand on their time. Graham King praised them both for all they had done to help encourage and support

Racketlon throughout the years, adding that both were very popular with the whole Racketlon community. FIR will shortly organise the process of voting on their replacement.

The President and the rest of the Council were voted into office at the Founding Assembly for a period of 3 years, and so do not yet require a vote to remain as Council members.

- Anna-Klara Ahlmer (Sweden)
- Dan Busby (Great Britain)
- Amke Fischer (Germany)
- Kresten Hougaard (Denmark)
- Kirsten Kaptein (Netherlands)
- Graham King (Switzerland)
- Poku Salo (Finland)
- Duncan Stahl (Great Britain)
- Marcel Weigl (Austria)

The president and the outgoing and remaining Council Members were given a discharge by the AGM unanimously.

6) Discharge of Outgoing Auditor Patrik Wartia (SWE), Election of Patrick Bürgi (SUI)

Graham King stated that Patrik Wartia had expressed his wish to be replaced as a FIR auditor due to time demands and thanked him for his work. He was given a discharge by the AGM unanimously.

Graham King announced that Patrick Bürgi, Switzerland, had volunteered to replace Patrik Wartia as co-auditor with Joachim Gersdorf, pointing out that he is a passionate Racketlon player and bookkeeper by profession, with the advantages of speaking German and knowing Swiss law. He was elected unanimously by the AGM.

7) New FIR members

Graham King announced that four new FIR members should be recognised at the AGM in place of the standard process of the FIR Council approving them and notifying the other members:

- Racketlon Luxembourg
- Thailand Racketlon Association
- Racketlon Union Afghanistan
- Spanish Association of Racketlon

He stated that Luxembourg and Thailand were already well-known as a result of their successful Racketlon tournaments, and that Afghanistan (based out of Austria with RFA's support) had even sent a national team to compete in the 2019 World Championships team event in Leipzig. Spain, as the most recent addition, was a result of Marcel Weigl's personal contacts.

Radu Ionescu inquired what criteria had been used to accept their membership applications. Duncan Stahl responded that all had completed the formal FIR application form and had fulfilled all the mandatory conditions.

All four members were unanimously approved by the AGM.

8) President's Report

Duncan Stahl presented the main events since moving the seat of FIR to Switzerland in February 2019 till today.

- His main goal was to raise awareness of Racketlon around the world and presented statistics of visits to our website to demonstrate how this had been achieved
- Two new countries, India and Luxembourg, were added to the FIR World Tour
- Player surveys to assess every tournament were introduced, replacing the previous FIR Delegate assessment. The weighted average of the numerical responses allowed FIR and the Tournament Directors to see where improvements can be made, such as in the playing conditions, hotel and catering arrangements, playing schedule, communications to players etc.
- From March 2020 onwards, all FIR tournaments were cancelled because of the Coronavirus, shifting the focus to intensifying social media activities to keep the Racketlon Community alive. This was achieved with regular publications and activities on our website, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, such as photos of past tournaments, interviews with past champions, fantasy tournaments between past and present Racketlon legends and Racketlon quizzes
- An online workshop for country members was carried out, with presentations on FIR's response to the Coronavirus, using social media to raise awareness, how the World Tour is organised, national membership structures of Switzerland, GB, Hong Kong and India, sponsorship and youth development. The feedback was so successful, that further workshops, targeted on specific areas for a selected number of members, is being planned
- An analysis of tournaments over the past year was performed, providing statistics of player participation. The key finding was that the probability of retaining a new Racketlon player were significantly improved if they played a second tournament within 3 months

Duncan Stahl pointed out that because of the Coronavirus, the FIR revenue stream was completely stopped from March 2019 onwards. FIR regularly made financial assessments and forecasts for scenarios of different levels of impact severity. The outcome, that the FIR financial reserves will run out in early 2021, made future changes to the income and cost structure of FIR, to be presented in the next section, unavoidable.

9) FIR and FIR Council, Vision for the Future

Duncan Stahl briefly presented his vision and planned key activities.

- FIR will support members more to help them promote Racketlon within their own countries, as global Racketlon growth needs to be at the national/regional level. FIR will organise workshops in groups of a few selected members to discuss social marketing, event organisation etc.
- FIR will take the necessary financial steps to ensure survival, by both increasing revenue and reducing costs
- FIR will extend its marketing and social media activities cost-free live-streaming, more videos, paid advertising etc. to extend its reach by 25%/50% compared to the previous year
- The remaining tournaments of the 2020 World Tour still scheduled to be held are in Prague, Graz and Lanzarote
- The 2021 World Tour will be announced differently to previous years, while many tournaments struggle with negotiation of a final date with their venues, considering their national governmental pandemic laws and general player uncertainty caused by the Coronavirus. Rather than declare the whole of the following year's programme around September, tranches of newly-finalised tournaments will be announced.
- The 2021 World Championships have been confirmed and will be held in August across two locations in Austria – Vienna and Graz. The biggest budget seen in the history of Racketlon has been confirmed, which will be used to ensure a tournament of outstanding quality

- FIR will set a "Racketlon Awareness Month" with extensive events, marketing, and social media coverage with a goal to reach as many new players as possible
- FIR will introduce a new mentoring system for new Racketlon players, considering the player participation analysis performed earlier. A new Council role will be created to ensure new players receive a pre-tournament welcome pack, assignment of an approved player-mentor to offer special encouragement and support during the tournament, and post-tournament follow-up.

Radu Ionescu inquired how the increase in the number of players will be tracked. Duncan Stahl responded with details of the mentoring plan explaining how the new system will allow us to track new players and whether or not they go onto to play more tournaments. He added that FIR is also working on a new scheme where it will offer incentives to TD's if they can attract a large number of new, first-time players to their tournaments. The details of this scheme to be announced before the start of the 2021 Tour

Marcel Weigl inquired of the Corona prevention for future tournaments, pointing out that the Austrian Open already has a concept and will require all participants to provide results of a Corona test prior to playing, and that they will accept player cancellation up until the day before the tournament starts.

Marcel Weigl inquired of the status of the planned World Doubles Championships in Prague. Svatopluk Rejthars responded that governmental rulings allow indoor events with up to 500 people, but that the situation is changing daily and that a final decision will be taken by 5th October. He added that the Czech Republic currently holds many national tournaments complying with governmental guidelines such as the wearing of facemasks when not playing, social distancing, hygiene rules etc. and that these would also be applied to any international tournaments in Prague. Frank Kleiber inquired whether he was aware of the responsibilities the tournament carries. Svata responded that the tournament organisation is very well informed of government requirements, of the financial risk of reduced player participation at short notice, of the necessary hygiene measures etc. and will fully comply with all regulations.

Duncan Stahl added that FIR will work closely with the tournament organisation, ensuring good player communication and that players give their confirmation they understand the risks, will comply with the tournament rulings, take full responsibility for any infection they may get etc.

10) Finance Preview, 2020 & 2021 Forecast

Duncan Stahl presented the forecast for 2020, noting that cancellation of all tournaments for the rest of the year would result in a total yearly deficit of ca. EUR 12'000. If the tournaments go ahead in Prague, Graz, and Lanzarote, this will be mitigated by ca. EUR 5'000

In both cases, FIR has no option but to guarantee its continued operations by raising additional revenue and reducing costs. Duncan Stahl presented various options:

- Increase player licence fees. The FIR Council had already decided that increasing the FIR country membership fees or the fees paid by Tournament Directors would be counterproductive
- Cancelling the FIR World Tour Race
- Reducing the tournament entry fee rebate for FIR Council members, offered to them to compensate for the work they do for FIR
- Fund-raising amongst the Racketlon community, such as producing a special high-quality T-shirt for players to purchase at a premium price
- Reducing the marketing costs

Graham King pointed out that the 2021 budget will only be approved by the 2020 AGM, expected to take place in January 2021. The first point above requires advance notice, to allow time to organise changes in Tournament Software and so will be put to the vote in the next agenda item.

11) Vote on New Financial Measures

Duncan Stahl presented the options for increasing the current yearly player licence fee for EUR15 to EUR30 and introducing a single-tournament licence for EUR 15 to retain the players who only played in their local FIR tournament.

Radu Ionescu proposed a yearly fee of EUR50.

Frank Kleiber proposed a yearly fee of EUR40.

Graham King stated that with the FIR Council assumption of 60% as many players in 2021 as in 2019, and that of this reduced number of players, 60% purchase a yearly licence, the results of these different prices are:

- EUR 30: revenue increase of ca. EUR6'000
- EUR 40: revenue increase of ca. EUR9'500
- EUR 50: revenue increase of ca. EUR13'000

A lively discussion amongst the FIR members ensued, including proposal of other options, followed by a vote:

- Vote on EUR15 for a single-tournament licence was unanimously approved, with 6 votes abstaining
- Vote on cost of yearly licence fee, approving the increase to EUR40:
 - o EUR 30: 12 votes
 - o EUR 40: 22 votes
 - o EUR 50: 1 vote
 - o Abstain: 12 votes

It was agreed that the possibility of players from some countries being allowed to pay a lower player's license fee will be looked at and assessed whether this could be possible. Based on the fact that this large increase in players license would be a much more significant barrier to players from some countries compared to others.

12) Rules of Racketlon Change: Bleeding, Injury, Conduct Warnings

Graham King briefly presented the proposal to harmonise the bleeding, injury and conduct warning rulings across all sports, pointing out there is much diversity amongst the individual international sports federations.

The Proposal was unanimously approved by the AGM.

13) Rules of Racketlon Change: Gummiarm Playoff

Graham King presented the proposed change, as discussed and agreed within the FIR Council, pointing out that significant scheduling benefits it brings to a Tournament Director, without resulting in any additional unfairness in calculation of the winners of round robin groups. He added that changing the Rules of Racketlon requires a 2/3 majority of votes present at the AGM.

A lively discussion amongst the FIR members ensued, including other options. Graham King confirmed there would be no warm-up time allowed, the Gummiarm Playoff could only take place well after the last player had completed his last match, there would be a toss to see who serves before each and every Gummiarm point, and only one serve was foreseen in each sport. Several options were put to vote:

The concept of a Gummiarm Playoff was unanimously approved by the AGM. Further refinements requiring a simple majority:

- Vote on whether one or two services to be allowed in each sport:
 - o One serve: 41 votes
 - o Two serves: 9 votes

- Vote on the whether a tied Gummiarm Playoff should be decided by a coin-toss, or a single Gummiarm point of tennis:
 - o Coin-toss: 3 votes
 - o Tennis Gummiarm: 36 votes
 - o Abstain: 11 votes

14) Statutes Changes: remote AGM's and Small Country AGM Bonus-Vote

Duncan Stahl presented the proposal to offer smaller countries an additional AGM vote if they send a national team to one of the World Championships over the previous two years. He pointed out that this additional vote would not result in any increase of the country membership fees.

KK Cheema considered that this would offer a good encouragement for upcoming nations, especially in Asia.

The proposed change was unanimously approved by the AGM.

Graham King explained that “pre-Corona” Swiss law did allow for remote AGM's unless explicitly determined in the statutes, to ensure management accountability to, and interaction with, their stakeholders. The Swiss government passed a special law allowing this for the limited period of enforced social distancing only. For future AGM's to also be held remotely, the proposed statute change, prepared by a Swiss lawyer, is required.

The proposed change was unanimously approved by the AGM.

15) Racketlon Youth Concept

Marcel Weigl gave a brief presentation of the Youth Concept prepared by the European Racketlon Union, offering u8, u10 and u12 children the opportunity to play Racketlon with modified scoring on reduced sized courts, partially using lightweight equipment and balls, with some age classes not playing all four sports.

The proposal was met with much enthusiasm.

16) Next AGM

Duncan Stahl announced the date of the next FIR AGM is planned be held remotely in January 2021. Final confirmation will follow at a later date.

17) Any other business

Radu Ionescu delivered a 45-minute speech voicing his belief of poor FIR management, that FIR is a totalitarian, not a democratic organisation, and that its current and previous presidents are both personally incompetent. Duncan Stahl said that he no problem to attach a transcript of his speech to the published AGM minutes, but also made it clear that he refuted and disagreed with the majority of Radu's assertions.

Duncan Stahl also responded that the feedback he has regularly received about the many improvements to the FIR over the last 18 months painted an entirely different picture to the one claimed by Radu in his speech. Duncan Stahl also pointed out that several FIR member countries and many more players had been in regular contact to say that if it wasn't for the good competence, excellent communication and hard work of the current FIR leadership, then they believe Racketlon would have been in fatal trouble as a sport as a result of the unprecedented challenges caused by the coronavirus.

The AGM was closed at 18:15

Minutes taken by Duncan Stahl / Graham King and confirmed by the outgoing and incoming Presidents

Duncan Stahl
(President)

Graham King
(Vice-President)