

FIR Council Meeting, Zoom, 24. February 2021, 20:00-21:30

Council Members present:

Anna-Klara Ahlmer (AK), Dan Busby (DB), Amke Fischer (AF), Kresten Hougaard (KH), Kirsten Kaptein (KK), Graham King (GK), Jean Michot (JM), Poku Salo (PS), Duncan Stahl (DS), Marcel Weigl (MW)

Agenda:

1. Budget for 2021 to be discussed and approved (before being sent out as part of the AGM Invitation) – see attached
2. The “Swiss proposal” (as per Graham’s email: re calculation of country membership fees and registered nationalities etc) – Graham to present
3. Discussion about countries who haven’t paid membership fees (and also do not respond to mails) and what actions we should take (FIR Statutes 5.6 “Disciplinary measures for late payment”)
4. Online entries for tournaments: Proposal to allow TDs to open their entries more than 3 months in advance (3 months is the limit we agreed in the last council meeting), as this is causing problems with some sponsors...but to restrict public promotion of the tournament (across social media etc) until 3 months before (or when agreed by council).
5. Brief update on the Tour

DS opened the meeting at 20:06 and welcomed all. GK was chosen to take the minutes.

DS started by pre-empting some of point 5, being relevant for the budget discussions, confirming:

- Most of 2021 World Tour now provisionally confirmed on racketlon.net
- Rotterdam rescheduled to early October
- Czech Open rescheduled to November
- Norway rescheduled to 2022
- Champions League, first leg in Switzerland, cancelled. Possibility of a 1-day Champions League in Paris (instead of just the 2nd leg) to be confirmed later
- World Tour Finals in December in Switzerland cancelled
- Next provisional tournament is Swiss Open at the end of June
- Biggest obstacle is the restrictions on international travel. Some tournaments could still be held even without, or with very limited, foreigners, such as Swiss Open and London Open in Roehampton. Some, such as Latvia Open, could not.
- The situation will be held under constant review

1. 2021 budget

DS presented 2021 budget.

Income

MW inquired of any possible “Corona subsidy” from the Swiss government. GK responded by saying that there is government support is for Swiss associations, but international federations are typically excluded.

DS presented the plans for the T-shirt fundraising initiative, planning to open for orders from mid-March until summer, with T-shirt delivery at FIR World Tour events. It was pointed out that the revenue from fund-raising was missing from the cashflow prediction

Expenses

MW the very unpredictable income makes budget very difficult, advising that RFA assigns costs which are not considered essential to income which is unreliable.

GK adapted the budget online assigning:

- Marketing costs to the Marketing Fund income
- Travel costs to TSF income
- Council member tournament entry fee rebate to player licence income

JM explained how French Racketlon France generates income, resulting in 4 clubs each becoming financially independent:

- offering training camps for juniors, who are generally excluded from Covid restrictions
- combining reduced rental costs & profit-sharing with venues and Tournament Directors

It was agreed that these good ideas cannot yet be used in the 2021 budget and they are initiatives which are good for national federations to explore within their own countries but more difficult for the FIR to organise. DS said he would speak to JM some more about these projects by French clubs so that the FIR can share the idea with other member countries.

General

MW proposed the budgeted profit be reduced to close to zero by reducing costs. And where necessary also income. It was agreed that GK would amend the budget Excel and DS would request the Council to approve before the AGM invitations are sent out.

2. FIR Country Member “Racketlon Size” calculation

GK explained that a Racketlon player is assigned 3 countries; nationality and domicile, chosen and maintained on setting up an account on Tournament Software, and the country chosen by the player when each year when buying the player licence. There is currently little control over these choices.

A country’s Racketlon Size, determining the number of AGM votes and FIR membership fees, is defined by the number of players “from that country on the world ranking”¹.

GK stated that normally the player nationality is chosen, but cases where this differs from the TS country or domicile were examined individually, especially in the case when the country of nationality is not a FIR member, adding that he should not be allowed to have an arbitrary choice how to assign players to countries.

After some debate, the Council agreed to interpret the statutes such that a country’s Racketlon size should be based only on players’ nationalities, unless not a FIR member, in which case the player domicile should be used. Players with neither a country of nationality, nor of residence as a FIR member, are prohibited from participating in FIR tournaments anyway².

GK to update the regulations³ to be effective from 1.1.2022.

¹ FIR statutes 7.10.4

² FIR Players and Draws Regulations 2.3

³ Subsequent to the Council Meeting, considered most effectively done within the FIR Ranking Regulations

3. **FIR Country Members defaulting on membership fees**

AF related the amount of effort spent on some countries who neither pay their membership fees, nor contact FIR (unlike Czech Republic and Sweden who proactively asked for debt rescheduling). MW stated that penalties should not be possible if FIR cannot be sure the country representatives have received the membership fee invoices. It was generally agreed that, as for normal companies, it is sufficient to issue invoices to the official contact details given to FIR, and that it is a country's responsibility to ensure that these be updated as necessary.

The FIR statutes do not allow⁴ for the FIR Council to prohibit members from voting at an AGM, just because of non-payment, though member suspension from FIR is possible.

It was agreed to appeal to the FIR members in the AGM invitation and to use the AGM itself to discuss further, should the issue continue to be a problem.

4. **Tournament Online-Entry**

DS asked for a Council vote whether to allow Tournament Directors to open online entry more than 3 months prior to tournament begin, citing the TD requests to market their tournament (making it clear that it cannot yet be guaranteed that the tournament will take place) and engage sponsors. Different points of view within the Council were discussed.

The Council then agreed by a majority vote to continue to not allow TD's to open their tournaments for online entry without advance FIR approval as it was decided that opening entries to tournaments while host countries were still in covid lockdown sends the wrong message

5. **World Tour**

Mostly covered in DS introduction, but DS explained further that the World Tour Committee had met to discuss the uncertainty and challenges surrounding the 2021 Tour because of the ongoing covid restrictions within most member countries and the effect on international travel. However, the Committee agreed that the FIR would do everything it could to allow world tour tournaments to still take place even if restrictions on international travel meant that many players were unable to travel to tournaments. While not ideal and clearly frustrating for those players who couldn't travel, it was felt there were crucial benefits to just holding tournaments again which would be key to helping the FIR and the Racketlon community recover from what will have been a very difficult last 18 months.

DS added that the World Tour Committee will also be meeting with MW next week to discuss the World Championships in particular and will revert to the FIR Council afterwards.

MW pointed out that the tournaments published on fir.tournamentsoftware.com were not up to date. GK advised that this was due to the delay in purchasing Tournament Planner licences. GK agreed to purchase a TP licence for fee and update the tournament calendar⁵.

6. **AOB**

JM related his worst-case scenario analysis for European Racketlon, with the closure of boundaries and the introduction of a vaccination passport for international travel likely to result in loss of players. The Council noted the risk and agreed to continue to monitor the situation closely.

The meeting was closed at 21:15.

Minutes by GK and approved by DS

⁴ Clarified by GK after the Council Meeting

⁵ Now completed