

# MINUTES FIR AGM 2024

Sunday 24th March 2024, 14:00 – 16:00  
Zoom online

**Chair:** FIR Executive President Duncan Stahl

**Minutes:** FIR Vice-President Graham King

## Final Agenda

- 1) Welcome note to members
- 2) Confirmation of minutes of 2023 AGM (12.11.2023), as published on [www.racketlon.net](http://www.racketlon.net)
- 3) Audited annual Financial Report 2023, Amke Fischer
- 4) Annual Report, Duncan Stahl
- 5) Consultative vote on 2024 budget
- 6) Discharge of Executive President and Council Members remaining in office:
  - Duncan Stahl (GBR)
  - Graham King (SUI)
  - Anna-Klara Ahlmer (SWE)
  - Myriam Enmer (FRA)
  - Amke Fischer (GER)
  - Kresten Hougaard (DEN)
  - Kirsten Kaptein (NED)
  - Jean Michot (FRA)
  - James Pope (GBR)
  - Poku Salo (FIN)
  - Adarsh Vikram Narayanaswamy (IND)
  - Marcel Weigl (AUT)
- 7) Discharge of FIR Auditors:
  - Patrick Bürgi (SUI)
  - Joachim Gersdorf (GER)
- 8) Discharge of FIR Board of Arbitration:
  - Karim Hanna (SUI)
  - Zigmars Puikevics (LAT)
  - Carola von Heimburg (GER)
- 9) Proposal from Council Member, Duncan Stahl:  
To remove FIR membership of Sport Recognised (SRE) and to instead use those funds towards an asserted new effort to begin the process of gaining membership of the Alliance of Independent recognised Members of Sport (AIMS)
- 10) Date of next AGM
- 11) Any Other Business

## FIR AGM Attendees

30 Countries present or delegated their voting power to other members, with a total of 74 of the possible 81 votes (91%):

Member Country	Nominated Representative	AGM Votes
Afghanistan	Doris Turner	2
Australia	Leigh Sands	1
Austria	Marcel Weigl	4
Belgium	delegated to Germany	0
Canada	delegated to USA	0
China - Hong Kong	Steven Cheng Wai Kit	3
Czech Republic	Svatopluk Rejthar/ Michael Horacek	4
Denmark	Kim Ljungberg	3
Finland	Poku Salo	4
France	Jean Michot	6
Germany	Jenny Schmitz	8
Great Britain	Johnny Bispham/ Kirsten Atkinson	9
Greece	Jorgos Georgoudis	1
India	KK Cheema	5
Ireland	Gary O'Hara	1
Israel	delegated to Switzerland	0
Latvia	delegated to Finland	0
Luxembourg	delegated to Malta	0
Malta	Duncan Stahl	2
Netherlands	Marc Veldkamp	4
New Zealand	Chris Bullock	1
Norway	Joel Durston	1
Poland	delegated to GB	0
Romania	Radu Ionescu	2
Spain	delegated to Austria	0
Sweden	Anna-Klara Ahlmer	3
Switzerland	Karim Hanna	6
Thailand	delegated to Netherlands	0
Turkey	Ersoy Koror	1
USA	Patrick Moran	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>74</b>

6 Countries absent with a total of 7 votes

Member Country	votes
Croatia	1
Estonia	1
Hungary	2
Slovakia	1
Slovenia	1
South Africa	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>

## **Non-voting FIR AGM attendees**

- Patrick Bürgi (SUI, Auditor)

### **1) Welcome note**

FIR President Duncan Stahl opened the AGM at 14:00, took over as chair, welcomed all representatives, noted that Graham King would be taking the minutes of the meeting with the aid of the Zoom meeting replay.

Graham listed the country members attending, the countries who had delegated their vote to another member, the countries not represented and confirmed the meeting should start as the 50% quorum necessary for the AGM to take decisions had been reached. Switzerland (Karim Hanna) and Afghanistan (Doris Turner) joined shortly afterwards, making a total of 30 countries represented at the AGM, with 74 of the 81 votes (91%).

Duncan noted that this AGM was exceptionally only 4 months since the last AGM, so there was not too much to report on, but as per the last AGM's decision, it will always be held at this time of year going forwards. Duncan confirmed the agenda, sent in advance, and requested anybody raising any points restrict themselves to 2 or 3 minutes to stop the AGM lasting too long.

### **2) Confirmation of Minutes of the FIR 2022 AGM (02.04.2022) & EGM (27.08.2022)**

Duncan asked for approval of the minutes of the last General Assembly of November 2023, which have been available on racketlon.net for the whole of 2024.

Marcel Weigl noted the agenda item regarding the budget was a consultative vote, asking when this was changed in the statutes from being a vote to approve the budget. Graham and Duncan responded that the statutes had never stated that the budget shall be approved by the AGM, but that the last AGM had approved that a consultative vote should follow the usual budget presentation and Q&A. This was then added as a completely new, additional point to the statutes, rather than modifying any existing text.

With no other points raised. The minutes were confirmed unanimously.

### **3) Financial & Auditor Report 2023**

Amke presented the 2023 financials, compared to the budget, commenting mainly on the 40% increase in player licence revenue, non-feasibility of the planned paid website project, postponement of the merchandise project, increased marketing costs (Facebook advertising) to spend the extra player licence revenue, our racketlon.net website upgrade, purchase of IT devices for streaming and videos, and the new country development to support India and Afghanistan with their player licences.

As a result, there was a nett surplus of EUR 779 and a balance sheet with EUR 31'418 cash available.

Amke also presented the auditor report, thanking Patrick & Joachim for their very thorough work.

Marcel asked about the difference between equity vs bank accounts and why the cash difference 2022-2023 was far greater than the annual surplus. Amke and Patrick Bürgi, one of the FIR auditors, explained the difference between cash-relevant and non-cash-relevant accounts.

Marcel asked who made website. Amke responded that the IT company recommended to us was called Digital Murph. Duncan explained more details of the website development, that it was recommended to make various back-end improvements to improve resistance to cyber-attack and system down-time, plus the ability to manage documents and media. During development, the opportunity was taken to also make some improvements to the presentation interface.

The AGM then voted unanimously to approve the 2023 Financials and Audit Report.

#### **4) President's Report**

Duncan presented the President's report (available on racketlon.net), noting that he was only reporting on the 4 months since the last AGM in November.

Duncan went through the large number of int tournaments during this period, including events in Czech Republic, India, Lanzarote, Thailand, Finland, Hong Kong, Australia and Poland. He said he was particularly proud at the development of the Asia tour, with the first IWT in India, and first international tournaments in Hong Kong and Australia, all of which were very successful and showed the huge global potential for our sport.

The Indian Racketlon President, K.K. Cheema then gave thanks for the support and guidance over many years from the FIR regarding Racketlon India's privately owned construction project to build the world's first ever purpose-built Racketlon venue just 90 mins from Mumbai and 30 mins from Pune. With ca. 30 high quality courts over the 4 sports, plus gym, residential accommodation, hospitality etc. and which K.K. Cheema hopes will be completed in time to open early 2025 for Racketlon activities. Duncan re-iterated that this was a very significant moment for Racketlon to have such a facility built and was pleased that the FIR had been able to help Racketlon India with their ambitious plans.

Duncan also noted that the success of the Hong Kong Open resulted in discussions to upgrade from CHA to IWT status in 2025, and that the Australian Open had received financial backing from local government, with the authorities being pleased to already offer funding for 2025. In addition, Duncan noted the discussions with New Zealand, South Korea, Japan and Malaysia, making Asia an extremely exciting prospect for future years.

Duncan described the Development Fund, in which the Development Fund Committee chose 6 countries (Norway, Czech Republic, Germany, Sweden, Ireland and Hungary) of the 10 applications to receive funding for their projects to grow Racketlon. Duncan gave details of two examples of projects in Norway and Czech Republic targeted largely at recruiting, motivating, and training junior development in those countries. Duncan then declared that the second round of funding applications for 2025 projects is now open with a submission deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> April.

Duncan talked of the collaboration with the sports marketing agency "Infront Sports & Media", who are a major force in assisting sporting organisations to get ready to receive sponsorship and funding, with many big-name partners such as FIFA and Roland Garos. They also have a division specialising in participation sports, such as marathons, which was more suited to helping organisations such as FIR. This year will be focussed on restructuring FIR operations to highlight our main assets which are relevant for sponsorship & funding, such as our growing participation levels, understanding our

player demographics (perhaps using a player survey), and ensuring the focus of our sport is in areas which might attract sponsorship. The global nature of our sport and its potential growth, its positive impact on physical and mental health are all key areas that have been highlighted to attract potential brand and funding partners.

Duncan warned, it is still too early to set any targets and that this is a long-term project, and Infront Sports & Media confirm it is significantly more difficult for international federations, than it is for national entities, where a lot of funding is based around a particular event, city or region. The first step for FIR is to get our house in order regarding funding and sponsorship.

Duncan gave details of the FIR merchandise project which was delayed from last year. Our partner has come up with very many original, professional designs such as T-shirts and other clothing which will be launched at the World Championships in Rotterdam. Duncan said that any nett profit arising from this venture will be put back into the FIR Development Fund so that it can be redistributed to those projects aimed at growing Racketlon.

Duncan then noted that the FIR Race, a rebranding of the previous FIR World Tour Race, was relaunched at the start of this year, with players being awarded ranking points based on their tournaments from the current calendar year. Similar to other sports such as tennis and squash, the top 8 men and women on the FIR Race will be invited to the World Tour Finals, organised by the Swiss Racketlon Federation at SihlSports in December. The Finals will be staged as a showcase event with at least EUR 5'000 prize money, referees, livescore/livestream etc. Duncan related that the player feedback had been very positive, with another level of motivation for the second half of the year up until the last qualifying tournament, the Indian Open SWT.

Duncan observed that there is also a FIR Race for seniors and juniors, with prizes being awarded, though with no Finals in December.

Further, Duncan talked of the initiative to gain international recognition with AIMS (Alliance of Recognised Members of Sport), the world's #1 international recognition agency alongside the IOC (International Olympic Committee). Duncan pointed out that AIMS is the successor of Sport Accord and GAISF, both of whom no longer exist, and is recognised by every national governing body within all of our member countries, and so FIR membership would be a huge step in helping our members achieve their own recognition and funding.

A FIR Recognition Working Group will be invoked to work with AIMS once they have published their membership criteria in April 2024, with the goal of initially achieving Observer Status, and later full membership. This coincides nicely with the work being done with Infront Sports and Media, who understand the importance of AIMS as a key part of how we attract sponsorship and funding.

Lastly, since the last AGM, the FIR Council has, on the basis of player feedback, made changes to the Gummiarm Playoff rules, as it was considered fairer to play 4 points in each sport, not just 1; National Team events, on the other hand, will now no longer use the Gummiarm Playoff, as they did in the 2023 World Championships, but instead play out tennis until the end, with a points countback system to determine the winner.

In addition, the FIR Council approved the Youth Working Group's proposal to change the junior age groups to have a regular 2-year gap for the younger categories, so that the standard age groups are now u12, u14, u16, u18, u21, which will all be offered at the 2024 World Championships. The Tournament Software ranking system has already been updated accordingly. Younger age groups, such as u10 and u8, are also encouraged where possible, but will not be formally recognised by FIR.

Summarising the 2024 outlook, Duncan wound up by stating FIR hopes to continue to grow the player numbers and introduce new tournaments in new venues, cities and countries, being firmly

convinced that the best way to grow Racketlon is via organised tournaments. The FIR Development Fund will also continue to support Racketlon growth, partially also supported by the launching of FIR merchandise. Taking the first steps towards achieving Observer Status with AIMS and working with Infront Sports and Media to prepare FIR for funding and sponsorship will also be key components of FIR's 2024 activities.

Karim remarked that there has been some negative publicity around Infront Sports and Media recently, and FIR should follow this closely to ensure there is no impact on our own image and reputation. Duncan thanked Karim, adding he was aware of this, but that FIR will be dealing with the division for participation sports, rather than the media-driven sports division, handling e.g. football and tennis, where the negative attention occurred.

Michael Horacek asked for more details of the financial agreement with Infront Sports & Media. Duncan stated that the agreement with Infront Sports & Media is based on a success-based fee, rather than a fixed retainer, so the financial risk to FIR is zero, and that these contractual negotiations are still ongoing.

Marcel said he is working with Infront Sports and Media for handball and claimed they will never, never do anything for a small sport like Racketlon, as they are used to dealing at a level of Champions League football and Racketlon is in the 10<sup>th</sup> division, meaning nothing will happen. Duncan disagreed, repeating that he is dealing with a new division specialising in participation-based sports, which is nothing to do with the main part of the company which is more media-based, than participation based.

Michael Horacek asked how player numbers stand now, compared to 2019. Graham suggested looking up these figures and adding them to the AGM minutes. Exact numbers are not easily available, but analysis by FIR Council member James Pope showed that all 2023 numbers to be up on 2019 – the total number of unique players, the players new to Racketlon, and especially the u18 juniors and women players.

The AGM then voted unanimously with one abstention to approve the 2023 President's Report.

## **5) 2024 Financial Budget**

Amke presented the 2024 budget, explaining that the file had already been sent to all members earlier and all questions arising had been answered by email. She ran through the income and expenses, explaining the major variances.

More revenue is expected from:

- tournament fees, as the 2024 World Tour has 3 SWT's compared to just one in 2023
- a further growth in player licences
- additional revenue from the merchandising project

More expenses are expected to result from:

- increased marketing costs (to handle the additional tournaments)
- web-site maintenance (to make sure we do not have issues again in the future)
- Tournament Software costs (to enable the FIR Race, plus also to make software changes for the introduction of Satellite ranking points and the different junior age groups)
- President's remuneration to increase based on the workload rising from 2 to 2.5 days
- Travel expenses (as a result of the increased globalisation of our sport)
- Council Member entry fee rebates (due to the expected increased tournament participation)

Amke stated that the resulting budget for 2024 showed a deficit of EUR 842 and asked for any questions in addition to those submitted earlier by email.

Marcel stated his opinion that 97% of the revenue comes from the playing community and nothing from sponsors, funding or additional revenue, adding that it has been this way for a long time, with FIR always postponing other sources of income until the next year. Further, he observed that the cost of services of the President had increased by 25%. Marcel stated that he finds these points unacceptable, and Austria does not approve the budget.

Jean Michot asked what the ROI (Return On Investment) was for the 2023 World Championships, given that FIR had signed a 3-year contract involving additional fees and work to be done. Marcel tried to clarify Jean's question further with his opinion that we agreed that after 1 year the event would be analysed and that FIR would expect more income than just the Tournament fees, having given the tournament for 3 years to DWS Events. Marcel then went on to state that he sees this as a problematical conflict of interest, with Duncan being President and also organiser of DWS Events.

Duncan asked Amke to show a slide of the World Championships tournament fee breakdown.

Jean said he thought that FIR had agreed to do some work on the venue. Duncan explained this was not the case, but instead the venue, on agreeing a 3-year commitment with FIR, invested in such things as set ISDN lines for livestreaming, flooring, lighting etc.

Graham said he thought that FIR's financial investment into the World Championships was in fact zero, and asked Duncan to confirm. Duncan agreed with this, saying that the term ROI is a probably a misunderstanding, as FIR made no investment or payments into the venue.

Amke then showed a slide of the World Championships 2023 (singles, doubles and teams) tournament fee breakdown, with a total payment of about EUR 11'000 by DWS Events to FIR.

Marcel commented that for the 2022 World Championships held in Austria, he had paid EUR 20k in such fees to FIR.

*A subsequent investigation of the FIR bookkeeping found that, of the EUR 36.000 (with EUR 25.000 prize money and players hospitality invitations) paid out by RFA to the broader Racketlon community for the 2022 World Championships, the fees to FIR were EUR 10'136.98 (compared to the EUR 9'802 in fees paid to FIR by DWS Events for the 2023 World Championships in London and Rotterdam).*

Marcel commented that he had earlier requested the financial numbers for organising the World Championships tournaments, which FIR could not deliver, as they do not own this financial information. However, DWS Events said he would deliver this information, which Marcel hoped would be made available to those needing it. DWS Events confirmed this will be possible.

Before voting on the budget, Duncan explained that he was previously paid for 2 days per week, which was unrealistic and did not give nearly enough time to manage all of the FIR's operations, and that more effort and time is really needed to be able to handle the increased number of projects and tournaments.

Marcel countered that it is not always possible to see on what Duncan is working, as sometimes it is as President, and sometimes as tournament organiser. He was not questioning whether Duncan deserves it, but felt if there is no sponsoring or fundraising to provide money, he doesn't see that FIR has the capacity to pay more for the President's costs, and so Austria will vote against the budget. Duncan counter-argued that 5-10 years on, long after he has left office, FIR should have a fulltime workforce which is paid a regular salary, which for him would be a sign of growth. He also said that



he always makes sure that the work he does for DWS Events as a tournament director and the work he does as FIR president is clearly defined.

The Budget was then put to the AGM to vote.

Jean Michot opened by saying that, after consultation with the Racketlon France board, France abstains, because they don't approve of the evolution of the budget for 2024, nor the upgrade of Duncan's salary, nor are there any signs of Racketlon development over the past 2 years. They also wish for more traceability, so they can follow the money. They are disappointed about that the 2024 World Championships are same time as Olympics; although they agree there were no other options, they feel disappointed that FIR could not find alternatives. Lastly, they understand it is normal for a World Championships to have drawbacks, such as was experienced with the poor food arrangements and the communication over the rules, but they want to make sure this is not repeated in 2024.

Duncan accepted this, but pointed out that there was indeed a full FIR World Tour Committee review, and that their findings were presented to the Council, to ensure these issues are avoided in the 2024 World Championships. He continued, that this is the advantage of holding the event at the same venue for 3 years – that it is easily possible to make improvements, which Jean agreed. Jean added that lastly, Racketlon France are curious that DWS Events is such a large stakeholder in FIR.

Duncan further clarified that World Tour is organised not by him, but by the FIR World Tour Committee, who receive proposals from various tournament organisers, and after analysis, prepare a FIR World Tour which they present to the Council for approval. They chose a 3-year commitment, as there were always so few World Championships applications, and it is very, very difficult to find new venues and organisers, and so a 3-year agreement gives us more time to try to find alternatives. DWS Events only offered to hold the World Championships as there were no others willing to do it.

Jean responded that he is just sharing Racketlon France's feelings and hopes this will improve in the future. Duncan asked Racketlon France to speak with him, Graham or the World Tour Committee should they need any further clarifications or explanations.

Michael Horacek said, after consultation with Svata, that the Czech Republic would also abstain from the budget vote, because although they support the FIR efforts to attract external funding, this issue has been ongoing for too long in their eyes, the increase in the President's remuneration and the increase of FIR revenue from tournament fees, although the structure is changing. He added, they would appreciate more transparency and detail in the future on the FIR revenue from World Championships.

Duncan responded by saying that the World Tour Committee will be writing to all Tournament Directors in the immediate future regarding the level of tournament fees and how FIR can help them with their tournament costs. Graham confirmed this process has already been started and the email should go out in the next week or so, thereby giving everyone enough time to make some corrections to the regulations in preparation for the 2025 World Tour.

The AGM approved the 2024 budget by a majority decision, with 52 votes for, 9 votes against, and 11 abstentions.

## **6) Discharge of Executive President & Council Members**

Graham explained that the existing Council's 3-year term of office only expires in 2025 and so elections are not necessary. He asked for their discharge from responsibility of the previous year.

The AGM approved the Council discharge unanimously.



## **7) Discharge of FIR Auditors**

Graham thanked the auditors, Patrick Burgi and Joachim Gersdorf, for their thorough work, pointing out that they were also appointed for a 3-year term until 2025, and so only their discharge is required.

The AGM approved the Auditor's discharge unanimously.

## **8) Discharge of FIR Board of Arbitration**

Graham thanked the Board of Arbitration, Carola von Heimburg, Karim Hanna and Zigmars Puikevics, for their work. On Karim's prompting, he noted that the Board of Arbitration were given 2 cases to resolve during 2023, RFA vs FIR regarding charges for the 2022 World Championships, and RFA vs FIR regarding Jermain Manner's eligibility to defend both of his World Champion titles (40+ singles and 45+ singles) in at the 2023 World Championships in Rotterdam.

Graham pointed out that the BoA also remain in office until 2025, and so only their discharge is required.

The AGM approved the Board of Arbitration's discharge unanimously.

## **9) Council Proposal to cancel membership of Sports Recognised (SRE)**

Duncan gave the background behind his proposal, that when the last AGM approved SRE membership, there was a fair amount of confusion and lack of information what SRE was, leading to many members abstaining or mis-voting, as they didn't know what SRE was. Duncan felt it only fair to inform our members better so a more educated decision can be made.

Duncan felt that SRE offers nothing to FIR, as it is completely inactive (their website has had no activity for 4 years, and at their last AGM in 2022, the SRE President resigned due to lack of activity). There is no service offered to SRE members; in fact there are only a handful of members, mostly involving fairly obscure sports. Duncan felt that FIR's membership of such an organisation actually does us reputational harm, as AIMS will not view it favourably when we apply for membership with them.

This proposal to cancel FIR's SRE membership has no personal connotations, it is simply that Duncan feels SRE membership is detrimental to FIR.

Marcel responded that he was very disappointed, and that Duncan once again plays the chameleon, and asked him why he brought this up as a normal Council member, rather than discussing it within the FIR Council, or talking to him directly.

Marcel continued that he agrees with Duncan's facts about SRE inactivity, but he found it inappropriate to assume that the last AGM vote was an invalid decision. He added it would be similar to him assuming Duncan was profiting personally from the World Championships (which he assured the AGM he does not).

Marcel continued that Austria has applied for full membership of the Austria Sports Organisation (currently they are only an associated member), which requires their membership of GAISF or a similar organisation (RFA will use SRE for this). Marcel added he is fully in favour of FIR applying for AIMS membership, but at the moment, it would cause him big problems for their current

membership application if the Austria Sports Federation would find out that FIR is no longer a member of SRE.

Marcel then threatened that this would also mean, RFA would maybe have to take FIR to court and sue them for the money/funding which they cannot achieve, because this was a decision taken by the AGM.

Marcel also pointed out that it will be very difficult to get AIMS membership, as they will insist that FIR voting power be “one country, one vote”, like the Olympic voting power. He felt that even if SRE is not so active at the moment, he didn't see that it does anyone any harm, and we can only profit, adding that the membership cost to FIR is only EUR 500 per year.

Marcel concluded by asking Duncan whether he had tried contacting SRE, to determine that they are not in contact with FIR.

In view of all these facts, Marcel asked the AGM to vote against this proposal, and only leave SRE once FIR is a member of AIMS.

Duncan confirmed that FIR did contact SRE but was still waiting for quite some time to hear back about questions we had.

He added that he was well aware that AIMS membership will require some fundamental changes to FIR, but that details will only be available in April when they publish their membership criteria.

Marcel asked Duncan whom he tried to contact. Graham/Amke confirmed that communication was with the SRE president, Peter Turkovic.

Amke asked Duncan to expand on the comment that the last AGM vote was incorrect. Duncan said that some members had come back to him saying they were confused what they were voting for, because of the way the RFA proposal to last year's AGM was structured in two parts.

Marcel asked whether FIR had yet paid its SRE membership. Amke said that the SRE President had got back to her saying he thought it had already been paid, but would get back to her and confirm. This further SRE feedback is still outstanding.

Marcel said he didn't think Peter Turkovic was the President. Graham confirmed that according to the SRE website, he is.

Graham asked Marcel, on the subject of paying membership fees, whether he had paid for the RFA FIR membership yet, as he thought RFA was the last one to pay.

Marcel replied he is not the last one to pay<sup>1</sup>, that he didn't pay because of these reasons, and he will not pay as long as FIR doesn't start working.

*In fact, the only member other than Austria not to have paid for FIR membership in 2024 is Romania*

Marcel then asked Duncan to step down as FIR President, in the interest of Racketlon, claiming that Duncan is only working for himself and his own gain – Amke is Treasurer, Duncan is President, Duncan organises all the tournaments etc and there are so many conflicts of interest, that in no other federation in the world could this ever happen, concluding that the only good thing would be if Duncan stepped down as President and someone else takes over.

Marcel suggested the AGM now vote on this issue and again asked for the proposal to be rejected.

Duncan said he was very conscious there was a lack of information last time we voted on the subject, so asked if anyone had any further questions.

Johnny Bispham said he found it really a bit concerning when a member threatens to sue the FIR (as Marcel, representing Austria had just done) after signing up with them to be a member. He asked Marcel whether he would be taking FIR to court for past funding, or funding he has not yet received, adding that if it is for funding not yet received, how will it be guaranteed that it will be awarded? Further, if Marcel is guaranteeing he will receive it, why can't he, as a Council member, help FIR achieve the same thing?

Marcel replied that the only time anyone is suing anyone is when decisions made by the AGM are not implemented correctly by the Council, as was the case with the decision at the November AGM to become member of SRE. *Marcel's assertion that the decision at the last AGM was not carried out by the FIR is incorrect. The FIR filled out an application form and submitted it to become a member of the SRE from 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 exactly as laid out in the approved RFA proposal at the last AGM*

Marcel said FIR should try to help its members and not cancel SRE membership just because Duncan has a personal issue with him, adding that if RFA gets damaged by this, they will think about future steps against FIR, so it is safest for the AGM to reject the proposal.

Graham pointed out that the statutes do not allow members to take legal action against other members or against FIR, making this very difficult to carry out. Marcel agreed to retract his words.

Karim Hanna said he supported FIR, if it felt it is better to put their effort and costs into an organisation other than SRE, and asked why Marcel doesn't bear the costs himself, if RFA is the only organisation to profit from SRE membership, especially when the 2024 budget shows a loss.

Marcel felt it was a question of principle and was sure SRE membership would help other members if they applied to their national organisations. Duncan countered that SRE is a completely unknown organisation, not recognised by any national sports body, who would see from looking at the SRE website it is a completely inactive, dysfunctional organisation, adding no value.

Marcel, added, of course he would pay the EUR 500, if were about the money. Duncan felt the primary concern was not financial, but that SRE membership is detrimental to FIR's reputation and other recognition applications.

Duncan asked whether ERU could help with RFA's current application, but Marcel says no, it has to be the World federation. Duncan pointed out that, although SRE has not yet supplied the membership terms and conditions, he assumed cancellation of the FIR membership would only be effective per end of 2024. Marcel said he could live with this as a good compromise, as his Austrian Sports Federation membership application could still go ahead.

The AGM approved the proposal to cancel SRE membership per end of 2024 by a majority decision (60 votes for, 14 against).

## **11) Date and time of next AGM**

Duncan proposed a zoom meeting towards the end of March 2025. The AGM acknowledged.

## **12) Any Other Business**

Jean Michot asked Graham for a summary of what happened with the PayPal issue, as this was a problem for the French Open.

Graham confirmed this was an issue, but was significantly worse for the Polish Open, for which he had to create 25 player licences manually. The problem was that Tournament Software's certificate with PayPal had expired. After a long chain of attempts with Tournament Software and PayPal (Europe & USA) to resolve this, the Tournament Software top manager resolved it by updating their certificate with PayPal and assisting Graham to update the fir.tournamentsoftware.com website to fix it. Unfortunately, this took 2-3 weeks.

Duncan/Graham pointed out, that there will be lessons learned from this, and even if it would happen again, we will at least know where to look, making it a much shorter outage.

Via Zoom chat, Jean asked whether there is any alternative to using PayPal. Graham said there is an Excel import interface for Tournament Software and an agreement could be possible with national organisations to collect player licences and pay FIR directly, passing an Excel of all the players concerned to be uploaded into Tournament Software. Both France and Switzerland approved of this solution.

Graham then pointed out that Greece (Jorgos Georgoudis) had agreed for their proposal to discuss replacing squash with padel in Racketlon doubles could be moved to AOB.

Duncan pointed out that one of the obstacles is the lack of venues with all 5 sports (if doubles were to use padel I and singles squash). Further, he feels it is fundamentally wrong to use different rules for singles and doubles.

Jorgos said the argument behind the motion is that squash is played in Racketlon as a real doubles event, whereas padel is the absolute doubles sport. Regarding the subject of available venues, he felt that if one thinks globally, lots of players can be attracted to Racketlon in countries where there are currently none, such as Spain and Argentina. Greece also only has a total of about 4 or 5 cities with squash courts, whereas padel courts are springing up like mushrooms.

Joel Durston related that he played fun tournament with some Swedish players called "Rackelon Max", where padel and pickleball were added to the 4 regular Racketlon sports. The end-result was a lot of fun for all and an increased awareness of Racketlon. Duncan felt there is a lot to be said for initiatives adding to the 4 Racketlon sports, or reducing to 3 sports (as in Racketlon Split) in a promotional way to raise general interest in the core sport of Rackelton, but that it is important to keep the fundamental rules of Racketlon sacred.

Johnny Bispham agreed on keeping the Racketlon rules sacred, adding that for UK, padel grew very quickly out of nowhere. He felt that there could be further new racket sports becoming popular in the future, making it untenable for a federation if the rules are subjected to chop and change every few years, just because another new sport has appeared.

India observes padel and pickleball as mainly fun and recreational sports, as opposed to the highly technical sport which is Racketlon.

Jorgos re-joined the meeting after some technical difficulties and said that Racketlon Split has some good advantages, but it needs to be done officially, and he plans to send an email to Duncan with ideas from the national federations of pentathlon and triathlon.

Graham observed that Racketlon Split was already added to the Rules of Racketlon when the federation was moved from Austria to Switzerland in 2019.

Johnny Bispham added one last word to put on record on behalf of UK Racketlon to thanks Duncan and the FIR Council for all their effort, commenting that anyone who has run a federation will know that most of the work goes unseen and is a pretty thankless job.

Duncan then closed the AGM at 16:50

*Minutes taken by Graham King and confirmed by Duncan Stahl*

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Duncan Stahl  
(President)

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Graham King  
(Vice-President)