

Draft Minutes of Meeting

Snowsport England – Alpine Skiing Committee

Date: Sunday, 29th November 2009 commencing at 10.00 AM

Location: Swadlincote Ski Centre

Present: Andrea Grant (Chairman), Tim Fawke, Gillian Gilyead, David Manns, Peter Heath, Muriel Ryding, Joanna Ryding, Darren Fellows, Piet Van Kempen and Guy Hornsby

Apologies: Steve Lambert and Hedley Beavis

1. Minutes of meeting held on 8th March 2009

These were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

2. Matters Arising

Grand Prix Series Sponsorship: as yet, no sponsorship has been secured for the 2010 series.

DSQ/DNF 2nd Runs: the 2009 Alpine Racing Bulletin had been used to reinforce the message that the continuation of these runs would depend on racers, coaches and officials taking them seriously.

Seeding of 'Restricted Entry' Events: TF confirmed that no changes were to be made to the seeding of such events as the impact on the seeding system was minimal as relatively few registered racers actually competed in them.

English Alpine Championships: an official SSE championship programme would be produced for the 2010 event.

Action: TF agreed to circulate a proposed contents list with names of possible contributors.

3. Seeding and Technical Panel

3.1 Single Pole Slalom Courses

DM reported that the use of single pole slalom courses (already used in 2009 indoor events) would be extended to outdoor artificial slopes and that this would be reflected in a new BACR rule. Single pole gates could only be set with the prior agreement of the Jury and that all runs in one event, or in events held at the same location over successive days for the same age categories, would have to use the same type of course (single- or double-pole).

The 'Guide to the Rules of Ski Racing' was to be updated to cover issues such as correct gate passage and the changes would also be included in the 2010 Alpine Racing Bulletin to ensure that all racers, coaches and officials were aware of how the rules worked.

3.2 TD Allocation to races

Once the 2010 race calendar had been confirmed DM would start the process of allocating TDs to each of the events.

3.3 Slope Homologation

DM said that a review of the current status of slope homologation across England was currently underway. All existing slopes would need to be re-homologated during the 2010 race season to ensure that they still met the necessary criteria – especially those relating to safety. Given the loss of some established outdoor slopes in recent years it would be important to consider alternative slopes for homologation purposes.

3.4 Event Medical Assessment Forms

Event Medical Assessment Forms (covering areas such as immediate first aid provision, nearest pharmacy, doctor and hospital, etc.) would be mandatory for all calendar races in 2010. DM would be contacting all appointed Chiefs of Race to ensure that the necessary documentation was completed at each event.

3.5 Seeding

DM had analysed the impact to date of the (2-year trial) rule change to allow two results from the same venue to count for seeding purposes. This had shown that 134 racers had improved their points in 2009 but only a relatively few of them had achieved significant reductions. He had also analysed which racers would have still improved their points if the rule change had required the two races from the same venue to have taken place on different days (thus preventing both runs of an indoor Club National from counting). Any further rule changes would need the TD Forum's agreement and that this would subsequently need ratification by, for example, the SSGB Alpine Executive (on which TF sits).

4. Race Organising Technical Panel

4.1 ROTP Committee

PVK reported that, as a result of losing several members from the ROTP, the committee was in the process of contacting a number of individuals whose names had been put forward as possible replacements.

JR agreed that, in her capacity of Skier's Representative, she would be prepared to sit on the ROTP (in addition to the ASC).

4.2 Alpine Championships

Arrangements for the English Alpine Championships were now well underway and the official's team was very near to completion. Energiapura had been secured as a sponsor for the event.

In addition to the FIS events, NJR slalom and GS races had been included in order to maximise the race entry opportunities for all athletes (especially the Males).

4.3 Artificial Surface Championships

Entry numbers for the indoor All England championship at Hemel had been disappointing – possibly due to a clash of date with another event and the peak summer holiday period. The outdoor championship at Sunderland had seen higher than anticipated numbers but the entries for the Minis event had been very low. Non-slope expenses, however, to run the outdoor championships had been high.

Action: AG to review the rules/budgets for future championship expenses.

The 2010 outdoor championships would be held at Norwich.

DF suggested making 3-year slope appointments to host the All England Championships in order to negotiate on charges.

4.4 Artificial Surface race Calendar

PVK said that the 2010 artificial surface race calendar was about 80% complete. Every attempt was being made to keep the exam period and the month of August free of races but this was proving to be a difficult task due to the large number of clubs seeking to hold a Club National. He confirmed that Gloucester had been appointed to host the inter-regional championships and that, in future, the intention would be to publish the full race calendar by August of the preceding year.

4.5 Grand Prix and Club Nationals

Whilst total entry numbers in 2009 for both GPs and CNs had been up on the previous year, the average entries per GP had been down (whereas the CN figure had remained the same). The 2010 GP series would have 3 outdoor and 3 indoor events with all 6 races to count for establishing the overall winner. There would, however, also be winners for each of the indoor and outdoor series of 3 races. The additional indoor GPs (on 2009) were to raise greater interest in the GP series as a whole and to increase entry numbers. SSE had incurred financial losses on the previous year's GP series principally as a result of significantly increased slope hire and trophy costs whereas the race entry fees had increased by only 50p since 2005. It had also been decided to increase the seed point entry level for GPs from 250 to 300 (championships would be kept at 250).

A debate took place on whether Minis should be allowed to compete in GPs. There were mixed views about this and TF restated SSE's position on the continued need to control the number of events open to Minis (to avoid them from being 'over raced' at such an early stage in their personal development).

Much consideration was given to the GP entry fee and whether this should be increased from £20 to £22. It was, however, agreed that the fee should remain at £20 for 2010 in order to remain competitive and affordable to racers. Discussion also took place on the need to increase the maximum entry fee that a club could charge for a CN and it was agreed that this should increase from £16 to £17 in 2010 and to £18 in 2011.

PVK said that budgets should be set for each GP and slope hire charges should only be agreed by an appropriate SSE official.

The ROTP had also recommended that the race charge to clubs running CNs should be increased from £300 to £350 for 2010 and this would include the hiring of bibs, radios and back-up timers. It was agreed to accept this increase but to allow Race Secretaries to claim back £10 per item not used.

PVK reported that the start-list draw for indoor GPs was to be 1st run top 15 males and females and 2nd run top-15 1st run finishers to go in reverse order. 1st run DSQs and DNFs would be allowed a 2nd run and that this would take place after the females 2nd run on the females course. There would also be no refunds of race entry fees unless genuinely injured.

4.6 Officials Training

13 delegates had attended a Level 2 course in Chepstow and PVK would be running a Level 1 course. Tony Archbold had been contacted to see if he would be willing to continue to tutor Level 1 courses and clubs were to be asked whether they would be interested in a Race Secretary training day.

DM had received a request from the Army to run a Level 2 course – as had ERSA. He was also prepared to run a calculations course.

The view was that anyone attending a Level 2 course should have first completed the Level 1 course and registered with SSE as an official.

TF suggested making the Level 1 course an online module and it was agreed that the list of officials (managed by Alan West) should be updated and access given to this list given to CoRs.

4.7 Equipment

2 drill bits and 2 gate keys would be needed for alpine/indoor events and bibs would need replacing in about 18 months' time. The hand-held back-up timers would need replacing in the not too distant future and PVK agreed to investigate possible appropriate replacements.

5. Alpine Squad Management Committee

5.1 Coaching Staff

MR reported that Ali Mathieson (who's been covering for Mike Barker whilst he recovered from injury) has had to cut back on the support he can give due to his university commitments and that Kelly Sage had been appointed as Assistant Coach. Mike was expected to be fully fit for the December camp.

5.2 Teams

18 athletes had been selected to the junior alpine team (9 male and 9 female), 7 to the SSGB development team (6 male and 1 female) and 9 to collegiate status (6 male and 3 female).

5.3 Development Team

SSE (via the ASMC) had taken over responsibility for running the male development team and a fully costed programme is now in place. The team is fully equipped and is based in Sansicario, Italy and Andrea Adorno has been appointed full-time coach for the season and he will be supported by a strength and conditioning coach and a sports psychologist.

The female development team has been taken over by SSS but the training arrangements offered were not suitable and they've had to devise their own programme to be based in France and kindly supported by Malcolm Erskine and the BSA staff.

5.4 GB Youth Team

MR said that 7 SSE junior team athletes had been selected to join the GB youth team (1st year FIS) – despite there being no firm selection criteria available. The GB youth team would have race entry preference over all other HN athletes even if the other athletes had significantly lower FIS points. Currently, there wasn't programme in place for the youth team and it was anticipated that they would continue to train with their HN. It was disappointing to note that some of the athletes in last year's youth team had been dropped from the SSGB team and were finding it difficult to continue their training.

TF commented that it would be important to consider viable alternative options to support these athletes and MR said that Barry Spouge and TF could attend SSGB Board meetings to make known these views.

5.5 Training Camps

MR felt that despite the challenges faced this year standards had been maintained. There had been 14 junior athletes on the October camp in Saas Fee and the development team were now in Sansicario preparing for the race season ahead. The next junior camp would be in Norway in early December.

6. Finances

6.1 Alpine General Accounts

PH reported that, to the end of October, the account was in surplus by around £1,500. Despite losses being made on the GP series (particularly from the indoor events) a surplus had been generated from all races.

6.2 Alpine Squad Accounts

All costs had been carefully managed and MR was confident that everything would come in on budget.

6.3 2010 Budget

At present there was a £12,000 deficit in the overall draft budget and that Alpine was being asked to find £4,000 to cover this deficit. Alpine expenditure was increasing faster than income resulting in a reduced gross margin. It was therefore likely that the Alpine and Development teams would be required to make a larger contribution to HO costs.

Race costs – primarily slope fees and trophies – had increased significantly over the last few years without a corresponding race entry fee rise. Currently, indoor slope charges were about £1,000 per day more than that for outdoor slopes. Covering the additional costs would require increased entry fees and/or more entrants.

To date, only £3,700 of entry fees had been received online for Alpine Championships against an budget of £38,000 – although it was very early days. It was noted that entries for the BARSC Championships were currently well below target.

7. ESSkiA

7.1 Summer Training

GG reported that 6 training days had been run with each one following the same format. Virtually all days had run at full capacity with the majority of trainees from ESSkiA member schools. These sessions were proving to be effective ways of encouraging schoolchildren into racing and the plan for next year was to possibly add a 7th day to cater for increased numbers.

7.2 National Championships

Six area qualifiers had taken place with around 200 teams competing. The finals had taken place at Rossendale and Dave Ryding had presented the prizes. An indoor championship was being planned for early May next year at Chill Factore.

7.3 British Schools Championships

These had been held at Pontypool and 21 teams represented English schools.

7.4 2010 Alpine Squad Training

There would be 2 groups in Norway in February and the junior squad would be training in Austria in March.

8. ASC Committee members and Roles

TF said that all terms of reference, roles and delegated authorities were in the process of being reviewed.

9. ROTP Chairman

Following David Pyle's resignation, AG had received 3 applications to take over as ROTP Chairman – these had been from Piet VanKempen, Mike Frith and Dermott Flahive.

Action: AG to circulate the CVs of each applicant for ASC members to indicate their opinions and preferred choice.

10. Seeding of Indoor Club Nationals

GH expressed the view that current trial of seeding each of the 2 runs of an indoor CN needed to be reconsidered in order to make it fairer with the seeding of outdoor CNs. He felt that if the practice was to continue then a higher minimum penalty should be applied to reflect the 'easier' indoor format and that 2 results from the same venue on the same day (i.e. at an indoor CN) should not be allowed to count towards the calculation of seed points.

Whilst the popularity of indoor centres was growing rapidly it was important to remember that access to these slopes was still not widely available (due to geographical, cost and slope availability factors) to the vast majority of clubs and their athletes. Outdoor slopes would continue to play a critical role in encouraging participation in the sport and the development of skiers/racers and this should not be overlooked in the process of embracing indoor slopes.

Action: review the situation at the end of the 2010 season.

11. England Dry Slope Squad

This was to be called the England Artificial Surface Squad and it was agreed that GH should be the Manager.

Action: GH to produce his plans for the selection, management and development of the Squad.

12. Conflicts of Interest

TF would send to AG for circulation a form to be completed by all members prior to the Committee's next meeting.

13. SSE Website

Any ideas for items to be included in the Alpine section of the new SSE website should be sent to AG.

14. Date of Next Meeting

AG would circulate details of the next meeting (to be held in March 2010) in due course.