

WCF Management Committee Report 2017

This report covers the year ended 31 December 2017

OVERVIEW

Membership

Membership of the WCF is currently 29, consisting of ten Full, ten Associate and nine Observer Members.

What the WCF does

The work of the WCF falls into four main categories, namely:

- (1) **World Championships** – from the perspective of the great majority of competitive croquet players around the world, the organisation of world championships is by a large margin the WCF's most important function.
- (2) **Development** – the expansion of organised croquet throughout the world remains a key WCF objective.
- (3) **Communication with Members** – keeping Members up to date with WCF and WCF MC activities and seeking Council's approval of MC recommendations through the e-mail decision process.
- (4) **Administration and finance** – ensuring that the day-to-day running, periodic tasks and financing of the WCF are managed efficiently. Specific subjects requiring management include the 10 year Championship Schedule, the WCF web-site, the Hall of Fame, WCF membership applications, the Rules of Golf Croquet and the WCF Statutes and Regulations.

1. WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

1.1 Under 21 Golf Croquet World Championship

The first WCF event of 2017 was the Under 21 GCWC. This was held from 18 to 22 February at the Victorian Croquet Centre in Cairnlea in the western suburbs of Melbourne, Australia. There was a very strong entry from New Zealand, where the Croquet New Zealand youth development initiative has been bearing very encouraging fruit, together with entries from Egypt, Australia and the USA.

The 2015 U21 GCWC in Christchurch, New Zealand had produced some excellent performances but the standard of play in 2017 showed a significant further improvement, especially in shooting skills, and demonstrated by a much higher level of success by U21 players in the main Golf Croquet World Championship held immediately afterwards.

New Zealand dominated the U21 block stage and produced three winners (Josh Freeth, the defending 2015 champion, Edmund Fordyce and George Coulter) and three runners-up (Angus Coulter, Felix Webby and Lachlan Hughes). Edward Wilson won block 2 to keep Australian hopes alive and Nadine El Menoufi (Egypt) won a play-off for second place in her block to reach the quarter-finals.

Freeth and George Coulter reached one semi-final where Coulter won in four games. In the other half of the draw, Webby beat Wilson in straight games with a superb

shooting display and repeated the feat against George Coulter to take the U21 title at the age of 17.

New Zealand's youth program shows no sign of slowing down so they look to be the country to beat in 2019.

1.2 Golf Croquet World Championship

The GCWC was also played at the VCC and took place from 25 February to 5 March. The event attracted entries from 13 countries with Egypt, Australia and New Zealand jointly producing three-quarters of the entries. Eight U21 contestants took part of whom seven had already qualified to compete on their own merits. They were joined by a further eight players in their twenties.

Five days of block play at the VCC, Geelong, Ballarat, Williamstown and Essendon produced three U21 block winners. The new U21 World Champion, Felix Webby, and Edward Wilson (AUS) won all nine matches in their blocks and Josh Freeth had eight wins. There were also four under-30 block winners in Greg Fletcher (AUS), Hamy Erian (EGY), Mohamed Karem (EGY) and Duncan Dixon (NZL). The only senior block winner was the 2013 World Champion, Reg Bamford (ZAF).

Nine of the last 16 were aged under 30 but three matches pitted them against each other and the semi-final line-up placed Ahmed Nasr (EGY), the 2004 and 2008 World Champion, against Felix Webby and Bamford against Hamy Erian. Bamford needed four close games to get past Erian 7-4, 5-7, 7-6, 7-6 while Webby produced another stunning performance to stretch his hugely-experienced opponent to the limit. Nasr eventually won 5-7, 7-2, 7-4, 6-7, 7-4.

The final between Bamford and Nasr represented the third encounter of a best-of-three in World Championship finals stretching back to 2008, where Nasr triumphed in South Africa 3-1, and continuing to the epic 2013 final in Cairo where Bamford recovered from 6-2 down in the fifth game. The 2017 final did not disappoint and went again to the fifth game where Bamford held firm to take his second GCWC by 7-6, 5-7, 7-4, 3-7, 7-4.

1.3 2017 Association Croquet World Team Championship – Tier 1 – the MacRobertson Shield

The MacRobertson Shield contest was held from 18 April to 3 May at Mission Hills Country Club, Rancho Mirage in the Californian desert. This was the 22nd holding in its 92 year history and Australia finally ended its own 82 year drought by recording a convincing and well-deserved victory, defeating England 12-9, New Zealand 14-7 and USA 14-7.

Playing conditions were excellent but the event will be also remembered for the heat. The afternoon temperatures began in the mid-30s Centigrade and reaches well over 40 degrees in the final week.

Although Australia came close to victory in 1982, they had to look back to 1935 for their last success in Association Croquet's premier contest. Their success was due to a well-balanced team effort and included three Fletcher brothers, the first time half of a MacRobertson side has been provided by one family.

1.4 2017 Association Croquet World Team Championship – Tiers 2 and 3

Tiers 2.1, 2.2 and 3 of the Association Croquet World Team Championship were held at Sussex County Croquet Club in England from 17 to 22 July. In Tier 2.1, Wales regained the title that it won in 2010 with Scotland second followed by Ireland and Spain.

Tiers 2.2 and 3 were played as a merged event. The onset of heavy rain on the final afternoon prevented the completion of the Tier 2.2 final between Canada and Sweden who therefore were declared joint winners with South Africa in third place. In Tier 3, Germany defeated the Czech Republic.

1.5 Forthcoming Events

Two events are scheduled for 2018:

- the Association Croquet World Championship will be held in Wellington, New Zealand from 3 to 11 February.
- the Over 50 Golf Croquet World Championship will be held in Cairo, Egypt from 5 to 12 October.

Event Hosts and the venues

The MC and its Event Sub-Committees are responsible for arranging and scheduling these events and handling entries and these involve considerable amounts of time and effort. However, the Event Hosts and the host clubs have the heaviest burden by providing venues and maintaining lawns, appointing officials, seeking sponsorship, arranging catering and taking care of all the other practical arrangements that are an essential part of holding a world championship event. On behalf of all the participants and other Members, the MC would like to express its gratitude to the 2017 Event Hosts, namely the Australian Croquet Association (U21 GCWC and GCWC), the United States Croquet Association (for the MacRobertson Shield) and the Croquet Association (for the ACWTC Tiers 2 and 3) and also to the clubs which provided the venues, namely the Victorian Croquet Centre and its supporting clubs, Mission Hills Golf and Country Club and the Sussex County Croquet Club (ACWTC Tiers 2 and 3).

2. DEVELOPMENT

The MC approach to development recognises that the WCF is not resourced to be a missionary organisation. It is instead founded on the principle of supporting national organisations because only they can provide the continuous support necessary for the growth of croquet at club level within their own domains. This support can take two main forms, namely providing coaching to Members and making capital grants to help develop croquet playing facilities.

Coaching can be in relation to improving playing and refereeing standards and in developing coaching skills so that Members can become self-sufficient. Coaching assistance can take place either by arranging for a coach to visit a Member's country or by offering courses for representatives of several of the smaller Members in one of the larger and more established Members, typically England to date. One of the key goals is to develop more qualified coaches in those Members able to benefit from this.

In May 2017, the MC repeated its financial support for those attending coaching courses for players and coaches from smaller WCF Members at the Croquet Academy at Sussex County Croquet Club in England. The WCF pays for the course fees and provides a small travel grant for those travelling from outside the UK.

The other standard form of support is when the WCF funds the travel expenses of a coach from their home to the WCF Member where the coaching will take place. The cost of an economy air ticket is the main item. The Member is then responsible for meeting all the travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses of the coach inside the Member's country.

The MC would also like to encourage any Member that does not yet have a top-class venue with at least four full-size lawns to consider putting together a project which the WCF can part-fund. The WCF will always limit itself to match-funding which means that the Member must expect to raise at least 50% of the project funds itself.

Any other ideas from Members for boosting Development are very welcome and will always be actively considered by the MC.

3. COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS

Newsletters

Newsletters are published on the WCF website every three months depending on activity and are intended to ensure that all those interested in what the WCF and the MC are doing are adequately informed and kept up-to-date.

Website

The WCF website is hosted by SiteGround who have proved both reliable and helpful. Using Joomla 3 as the content management system has greatly eased website administration and development. Updates happen automatically.

Council decision-making

The Council took four decisions in 2017. These were:

- 63: Request to the Portuguese Croquet Federation to remove suspensions.
- 64: Management Committee elections (see below)
- 65: Approval of 2018 budget
- 66: Election of Brian Havill as Independent Examiner

The Council also undertook one consultation in 2017, namely:

- 62: Consultation on future arrangements for the Under 21 GC World Championship.

This led to agreement to dispense with U21 places at GCWCs because the U21 contingent is now more than capable of qualifying for GCWC Ranking Places.

Elections

In addition to the annual election of the Independent Examiner, three members of the Management Committee retired at the end of their four-year terms and stood for re-election. There were four candidates, namely Lita Gale (PRT), Peter Landrebe (AUS), Roberts Stafekis (LVA) and Geoff Young (NZL). Messrs. Landrebe, Stafekis and Young were all elected to serve for a further four-year term to 31 December 2021.

4. ADMINISTRATION

WCF Statutes and Regulations

There were no revisions in 2017 but some are planned for early 2018.

Hall of Fame

There were no nominations in 2017. The citations of the 42 members of the Hall of Fame were reviewed, updated and, where appropriate, refurbished to adopt a more uniform approach and to add more colour to those that consisted largely of lists of events and dates. It is intended to relaunch the Hall of Fame in early 2018.

Management Committee matters

The MC felt obliged to investigate when it was informed by the Portuguese Croquet Federation that it had suspended individuals and clubs from PCF membership. The matter was eventually referred to the WCF Council as Topic 63 which evolved into a request from the Council that the suspensions be withdrawn. This was done and it is to be hoped that Portuguese croquet can develop positively in future.

*The WCF Management Committee
10 March 2018*