

British Parachute Association

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Competitions Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
Wednesday 29 August 2001 at 1830
at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present:	John Smyth	-	Competitions Chairman
	Paul Applegate	-	Discipline Rep: New Age
	Chris Clements	-	Discipline Rep: Classics
	Dona Crum	-	Discipline Rep: FS
	Carl Williams	-	Co-ordinator, Camera Roadshow
In attendance:	Chris Allen	-	BPA Chairman
	Martin Shuttleworth	-	National Administrator
	Lucie Wood	-	Development Officer (to item 49)
Observers:	Craig Cunningham)	
	Liz Groucott)	
	Lisbeth Harris)	The Chairman welcomed
	Nick Lupton)	competitors attending
	Ian Matthews)	
	Andy Pook)	
Apologies for absence:	Tim Andrewes	-	Competitions Vice Chairman
	Kate Charters	-	Judges' Co-ordinator
	John Hitchen	-	NCSO
	Ian Marshall	-	Discipline Rep: CF

Item Minute

47/01 Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2001

Paul Applegate proposed, and Carl Williams seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2001 be approved as a true record. This carried unanimously.

Approved

48/01 Matters arising

48.1 Page 2, item 38.3 Dr Roger Flinn's Judges' Logbook

This would be considered at the next meeting, as Kate Charters had been unable to be present tonight.

Action: Next meeting

48.2 Page 2, item 38.6 CF 2-way Competition and Possible new BPA Certificate

These items had been actioned to Ian Marshall, who was unable to be present tonight. They would therefore be carried forward to the next meeting.

Action: Next meeting

48.3 Page 3, item 39.1 World Air Games (WAG) 2001 Parachuting

The Chairman confirmed he had sent a letter of thanks to Patrice Girardin of France. Dona Crum asked about the judges' tapes from WAG, which it was understood had recently arrived in other countries. She would contact John Hitchen about the tapes on his return from leave.

48.4 Page 6, item 42, Cost of XL's participation in the World Games in Akita

At the August Council meeting, due to an oversight, John Smyth had not formally proposed that the BPA should itself fund the £5K cost of Team XL's participation in the World Games, Akita, rather than using part of the exchequer grant of £25K that UK Sport had allocated to BPA competitions. He would therefore now put forward the proposal at the October Council meeting.

Action: Chairman to propose to next Council meeting

49/01 Review of Nationals and Grand Prix Competitions 2001

49.1 Nationals

Next year's Nationals would be the selection Nationals in all disciplines for the British National Team to compete in the World Championships that were likely to be held, subject to IPC's decision early next year, in Gap, France, in September 2003. Therefore, the Committee reviewed this year's Nationals and the lessons learned for next year.

49.1.1 Classics/CF Nationals

Chris Clements reported that the Classics Nationals 2001 had been held at Strathallan because Bridlington, the original venue, had pulled out for financial reasons made clear to, but outside the control of, the Committee. She noted that there had been no penalty clause to stop a centre from pulling out and suggested that the inclusion of such a clause might be considered in the bid form for next year. The Classics/CF Nationals - on the original dates but at the new venue - had been poorly attended with five senior classics jumpers but no juniors or intermediates, possibly because many potential competitors would have had a long way to travel. Video had been available but there had been no video operator. A competitor had suggested that a style judge might be the video operator, but the Committee considered this would present a conflict of roles. The names of about four ground-to-air camera persons came quickly to mind; there may well be others but they were not flagged on the Membership database for identification. It was considered that coaching in this skill might be included in a camera operators' roadshow. In discussion, it was suggested that a ground to air camera operator might be included as part of a judging team, other than as a style judge.

Action: Refer to Kate Charters

The Committee recorded its thanks to Maggie Penny of Wild Geese, who had kindly provided a new trophy, The Ian Foreman Memorial Trophy, for the Classics intermediate event.

For 2002, Chris Clements believed that the combined Classics/CF Nationals should remain, and that the event should again be held over two consecutive weekends. She suggested that selection for the World Championships should be deferred until 2003 (on-year selection) but the Chairman said that it would unfortunately be impossible for many of those who qualified to get release from their employment at such short notice, or for the World Championship registration process to be completed to the organisers' deadlines, which were always well ahead of the event. Off-year selection therefore remained the only practicable approach.

After discussion of the current poor take-up of competitive skydiving in Classics and CF in the UK, the Chairman said he would write to all UK DZ Operators to ask if any were likely to bid for a weekend format next year, in the light of the financial considerations that had caused Bridlington to pull out due to a low number of projected entries this year. He would go on to say that in the event that no DZ wished to bid, what would be their opinion of the BPA approaching the Army Parachute Association to ask if the Classics/CF Nationals could be combined with the Army Parachute Championships in 2002.

Action: Chairman

49.1.2 FS Nationals

Dona Crum reported that the FS Nationals at Hibaldstow had been a great success, with good facilities at the Drop Zone and a healthy number of junior and intermediate teams jumping in excellent weather. The Chairman said he was convinced that the coaching roadshows had helped to boost interest in the discipline.

The Chairman reported that he had received many e-mails from FS competitors praising the format of holding the meet over two weekends, which had allowed more junior and intermediate jumpers to enter because they had to take less time off work. The ultimate success had been the clear separation of 4-way and 8-way events which had commanded practically unanimous support from competitors.

After wide discussion involving the competitors present, and consideration of holding the meet over a week or over successive weekends, Chris Clements proposed and Paul Applegate seconded a motion that, subject to Clubs and Centres having no substantial objections, the FS Nationals 2002 would be held from Saturday to Monday over two successive weekends (with a third in reserve, as it was a selection year) during late July/August 2002. The first weekend would be for the 4-way event, the second for the 8-way.

Carried unanimously

The Chairman would consult on the above with Clubs and Centres that had held the FS Nationals in the recent past, to check that the above format would be acceptable to them.

Action: Chairman

The draw for each event would be made on the Friday evening. Andy Pook asked whether this could be done earlier in the evening. In discussion, it was considered that a judge should make the draw but if the judge had not yet arrived on site, he or she could make the draw elsewhere and relay it to the Meet Director - it was more important for competitors to get the draw done early than for them to witness it taking place.

49.1.3 New Age Nationals

Paul Applegate reported that the New Age Nationals at Sibson had unfortunately been so poorly attended that all who had entered, apart from one team, had won a medal. A trophy awarded last year had not been returned, so Sue Meacock had had to obtain a replacement at short notice, for which the Committee recorded its thanks. The Committee decided that in future, winners would be asked to sign for their trophy on a pro forma which they would be asked to complete to state the location of the trophy, the holder's contact details, etc, with an undertaking to return it in good time for the following year's competition.

Action: BPA Office (Lucie Wood)

As the weekend format had been acceptable to those attending it was considered that, in the absence of any clearly better format, it should be retained for 2002.

49.1.4 Late entry fee

There followed a discussion about the absence of a late entry fee in this year's Nationals. Chris Allen pointed out that it had made planning more difficult for host Clubs and Centres, not knowing whether 20 or 200 competitors would enter. However, the Chairman said that the lack of a late entry fee had swept away a barrier to last-minute entry, particularly for junior and intermediate teams, and he was convinced that this had contributed significantly to the success of this year's FS Nationals. The host DZ, which had experienced both alternatives, had preferred the option of more, albeit later registering, competitors. He hoped therefore that there would be no formal proposal to re-introduce a late entry fee in any discipline.

49.2 Grand Prix

Chris Clements noted that the leg of the Classics/CF Grand Prix that had had to be relocated from Brunton, which had been closed due to foot and mouth restrictions, had achieved a good attendance at Hinton. This had proved that competitions in the south could attract a healthy number of entries.

There followed a discussion about the future of Grand Prix or Regional competitions. Chris Allen suggested that the UK might be divided into three regions so that smaller competitions could be held that would be less likely to interfere with a Club or Centre's normal operations, give jumpers' the opportunity of visiting other Centres in their region, and might mean that judges would not have as far to travel. This would produce three champions in each discipline - north, central and south, with a jump off at a suitable competition to decide the overall champion / winning region. This sort of approach was set out in the World Class Performance pamphlet.

In discussion, it was noted that this format might increase costs (although Certificates could be awarded instead of medals) and that judges were not located uniformly in each region, so that more extensive travelling would probably be inevitable. Also, Clubs and Centres in the south had been reluctant to bid to host competitions. With these points in mind, Carl Williams suggested that it might be sensible simply to have two regions - north and south, with some discretion in setting the boundary.

The Chairman asked each of the Discipline Reps, ahead of the next meeting, to consult with Clubs and Centres on the idea of holding Regional Competitions in 2002 based on two or possibly three regions, and to consider the rules that might be applied if this was progressed.

Action: Discipline Reps

50/01 Selection and funding criteria for the Great Britain and Northern Ireland National Skydiving Team

50.1 Selection criteria

After discussion, a strong consensus emerged that the previous selection criteria for the offer of an **unfunded** place in the National Team had been too stringent. Setting a score no more than 75% down the World Championship league table had been based on the FS 4-way competition in which 30 or more countries had competed, but had not translated well to other disciplines such as CF 4-way rotations in which only 10 or 12 nations competed, or to classics. That approach would therefore be discontinued in favour of a more inclusive policy.

Chris Clements proposed, and Dona Crum seconded, a motion that the Competitions Committee should apply less rigid criteria for selection to the National Team.

Carried unanimously

As selection would continue to be off-year, there would be about a year between selection for, and competition in, the World Championship. Therefore, the Committee reserved the right to require an improvement in performance for selection for the national team. This might apply, for example, to anyone who had done little or no training and turned up at the Nationals purely for selection. What the Committee was looking for was first, safe jumping, which was an absolute requirement for admission to the National Team, as safety concerns were firm grounds for declining to select an individual or team. Secondly, the Committee sought commitment, which might need to be demonstrated for example by a specified improvement in performance if it had been particularly poor.

50.2 Funding criteria

Chris Allen summarised the situation regarding competitions funding by the UK Sports Council. UK Sport had made an exchequer grant of £25K for BPA Competitions during the current financial year. This grant had been secured by setting out clear criteria for funding athletes who reached a level of performance equal or better to fourth place at the last World Championship. This meant that they had a realistic opportunity to bring home medals. The share of the available funding was determined by a public survey that ranked sports in order of priority on a scale of 1 to 5. Sport for disabled people came out consistently as the top priority number 1, and skydiving unfortunately came out as one of the lowest priorities for public funding with a typical score of around 4.6.

As UK Sport was the government body responsible for the distribution of taxpayers' funds for sport, it naturally had properly to account for what it spent. UK Sport's public accountability

was through its adoption of objective, quantifiable criteria - facts and figures. Chris Allen said that no guarantees could ever be given about future exchequer funding, but his advice was that the funding criteria that were now in place had secured a UK Sport grant, and there was therefore every hope that they might do so again. However, any reduction or fudging of the criteria might be expected to result in a reduction or even a complete loss of a grant for competitions, as had unfortunately happened within recent memory.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that it was clear that whilst competitions funding remained underpinned by an exchequer grant from UK Sport, there was no realistic alternative but to keep in place the existing performance criteria for a funded place in the National Team - ie, a score equivalent to fourth place or better at the last World Championship.

The Chairman said there would be no way of knowing, until next June, whether next year's bid to UK Sport for competitions funding would be successful, and therefore the size of the pot could not be determined. That said, every endeavour would be made to obtain funding from other sources, as the Chairman predicted a funding crisis within the next 2 to 4 years. The BPA Council had funded top teams in the past - XL and VMax to the tune of £45K last year - and the Chairman said that as long as he was a Member of the Council he would continue to do all within his power to secure additional funding from the BPA. However, it was vital to continue to cast the net more widely in the quest for funding.

Competitors, especially top competitors, had often been very successful in securing modest sponsorship deals for themselves from within the parachuting community or from their employers or other organisations local to them. However, the big corporate sponsorship deal for the National Team had proved to be elusive. Approaches were constantly being made for sponsorship by many within the BPA, including Committee Members, Competitors and of course the Development Officer, for whom it was part of the job description, but it was important to be realistic about expectations. Consideration had been given to engaging the services of skilled high-level sponsorship negotiators, but such an individual would first have to be identified and even then they would not be guaranteed success, and would normally want an up-front payment rather than just a percentage of any funding secured. The bottom line was that medals were needed both to demonstrate to UK Sport that objectives were being achieved, and to attract commercial sponsors.

The Chairman said he had mentioned at the last Council meeting that he in mind to make a proposal at the AGM that a non-discretionary donation to the British Team Fund should be added to the Membership subscription for 2002/3. Assuming the current Membership of about 5000 individuals, a £5 donation would raise about £25K and a £10 donation would raise about £50K.

For further consultation and discussion

The Chairman said he had also mentioned at the last Council meeting the idea of adding £5 to Student/Provisional memberships, but this had received a very negative response such that in the Chairman's judgment, it would be counter-productive to pursue it.

No further action

At the suggestion of Ian Matthews, the Chairman said he would be pleased to try to identify appropriate people in the sport who might be asked to seek sponsorship on a commission-only basis.

Action: Chairman

The Chairman expressed the Committee's gratitude to Chris Allen for the benefit of his advice on the never easy subject of competitions funding.

51/01 Competitor coaching

51.1 Coaching for Senior Teams/Competitors

The Committee invited, through the Discipline Reps, Senior Teams/Competitors from all disciplines, who could demonstrate a track record of commitment, to formulate and submit to the Committee, in time for its next meeting, a costed training plan to cover the period between now and the end of June 2002 (the Action Plan year / BPA financial year). The Committee would then consider how the available funding for coaching seniors could be applied to best effect.

Action: Discipline Reps to contact Senior Teams/Competitors

51.2 Skills coaching roadshows for Juniors and Intermediates

Dona Crum reported that a first rate FS skills coaching roadshow had been held at Langar. The Chairman said it had been exceptional value for money on the basis of the number of junior and intermediate jumpers who had attended, and the number of jumps made, all for a cost to the BPA of only £300. Another FS coaching roadshow had been held at Strathallan concurrently with their Extravaganza, which had made it difficult for the DZ to tease out the attendance and jumping figures specific to the roadshow. Camera operators' roadshows, co-ordinated by Carl Williams, were being organised concurrently with FS Roadshows. A good CF roadshow had also been held, for which thanks were due to Ian Marshall.

A number of Classics roadshows had been held, at Brunton, Bridlington and Strathallan, but although some had attracted good numbers at the seminars, there had been relatively few jumps. The Chairman thanked Chris Clements for her hard work in co-ordinating the coaches and venues in her effort to breathe life into the discipline, which had in itself been a tremendous organisational achievement. However, he had to express concern at the cost of over £1K in terms of the overall low number of jumps made which would not be seen to represent good value compared with the FS roadshows.

Chris Clements urged that Classics Roadshows should not be discontinued and tabled evidence from the Internet newsgroup *uk.rec.skydiving* that the Classics disciplines of style and accuracy, particularly style, were poorly understood. She said that only a few DZ's had accuracy landing tuffets and that it was therefore unfair to compare the Classics with FS. The Committee agreed that the forthcoming Classics roadshow at Headcorn should go ahead as planned. For next season, the Chairman suggested that the format might be switched to a swoop canopy or canopy control roadshow, possibly coached by someone like Chris Lynch if he was willing, to broaden its appeal and to promote interest in the proposed BPA Swoop Canopy competition, on which the Committee was currently awaiting safety advice from STC. Chris Allen supported this approach, suggesting that canopy control could attract interest at the grass roots that might carry forward to produce a new generation of accuracy jumpers.

Action: Review at Next Meeting

Lisbeth Harris suggested that Sibson would be an ideal venue for a New Age Roadshow as the coaches were based there. All that was needed was the promotion of agreed dates as part of the BPA coaching roadshow programme.

Action: Paul Applegate

The Chairman said that the roadshow programme was an excellent concept that was generally working well. He thanked Committee Members and the Coaches for their sterling work. There remained some doubt about who should initiate a roadshow - a Discipline Rep or a DZ - stemming from the initial wording in the Magazine which had not specified. In fact, it had been intended that Clubs and Centres wishing to host a roadshow should initiate the process by contacting the appropriate Discipline Rep. It was agreed that the office would put out a note to DZ Operators to state this, with a proviso about New Age where Paul Applegate reported that the coaches might be less inclined to travel from their home DZ.

Action: BPA Office / Paul Applegate

52/01 Judging matters

Kate Charters had sent a written update on judging matters, which had been circulated and was noted with thanks. Kate Charters would give her end-of-season report to the next meeting.

Dona Crum reported that Omniskore had not worked properly at the FS Nationals. This had been due to the wrong software having been supplied, which had been entirely outside the control of Bob Charters, and to problems in the line feed to the bar at the DZ which were equally outside the control of the judges. There had been criticism about delays to posting the FS scores on the web, this having been due to the delayed advice of the scores to the BPA Office. It was suggested that the host DZ might also post the scores on its own website, but it was pointed out that this might not be instant because some Clubs and Centres did not maintain their own sites. It was agreed that the target should be for the Chief Judge of a meet to have the ratified results at the BPA Office by the Monday morning following a weekend meet.

Paul Applegate recorded his thanks to the judges at the recent New Age Nationals.

Dona Crum suggested that a new Trainee Judge in New Age, Sue Skull, should be funded to attend the IPC New Age Judges' Training Seminar to be held in Germany in October - this was proposed by Paul Applegate and seconded by Chris Clements.

Carried unanimously: Dona Crum to advise Sue Skull

Dona Crum said that unfortunately, she may not be available on the dates to attend the judges' seminar herself, but would try to do so if she possibly could. Karla Cole was believed to have registered (*Note: Karla Cole reported subsequent to the meeting that she has put her name down for the seminar, but that she is only one of only three registrants to date and the seminar needs a minimum of five to run.*)

53/01 Classics World Cup of Champions - Slovak Republic, 2002

Chris Clements proposed, and Carl Williams seconded, a motion that Jeff Chandler and Esther Reynolds, as reigning British champions, should be invited to represent Great Britain, at their own expense, at the Classics World Cup of Champions to be held in the Slovak Republic from 25 July to 3 August 2002.

Carried unanimously

Jeff Chandler had already confirmed to the Chairman that he would be pleased to attend. The office would write to invite Esther Reynolds.

Action: BPA Office

54/01 World Games, Akita, Japan - August 2001

The Chairman highlighted a report from Pete Allum of Team XL on the recent World Games in Akita, Japan, in which the team had competed, by invitation, in 4-way FS. The team thanked the BPA for funding them. The event had been extremely well organised, and the Chairman's conclusion from Pete Allum's report was that it been everything that the World Air Games Parachuting Championships in Spain *should* have been! XL had greatly enjoyed competing in the best event in FS that Pete Allum had ever witnessed, with some 3,000 to 6,500 spectators plus good media coverage. XL's result in a competition of seven rounds had been just short of a medal, in fourth place. IPC had assisted in the organisation of the event, which had proved to the Committee that a well-run competition could be held. The BPA would press IPC, through John Hitchen, to do everything it could to ensure that future World Parachuting Championships were similarly well organised.

55/01 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 2 October 2001 at 1830, at the BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester.
(Carl Williams apologised for absence as he would be outside the UK.)

The meeting closed at 2200.

Distribution: Council, Vice Presidents, Staff, Editor.