

British Parachute Association

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Competitions Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

Wednesday 17 July 2002 at 1825

at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present:	John Smyth	-	Competitions Chairman / Discipline Rep: Classics
	Paul Applegate	-	Discipline Rep: New Age
	Ian Marshall	-	Discipline Rep: CF
	Jim White	-	Discipline Rep: FS
In attendance:	John Hitchen	-	NCSO
	Kate Charters	-	Judges' Co-ordinator
	Nigel Holland	-	Asst to Discipline Rep, New Age
	Martin Shuttleworth	-	National Administrator
Observers:	Bob Charters		
	Liz Groucott		
Apologies for absence:	Lucie Wood	-	Development Officer

Item Minute

42/02 Minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2002

Paul Applegate proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2002 be approved as a correct record.

Approved

43/02 Matters arising

43.1 Page 1, item 33.2, Classics Central Regionals

The Chairman reported that Steve Jelf was due to take over in August as the new CCI of Silver Stars. He therefore asked the Office to contact Steve Jelf to ask whether Silver Stars would be prepared to host this year's Classics Central Regionals at a mutually convenient date to be arranged, probably towards the end of September.

Action: BPA Office

(*Note:* Subsequent to the meeting, Steve Jelf advised that he was taking over as CCI on 6 August. He would therefore need time to familiarise himself in his new post first, and would not therefore be ready to say until about mid-August whether or not Silver Stars would be able to host this competition.)

43.2 Page 1, item 33.3, Accommodation for the UK team at Gap, France, for the WPC, 7-14 September 2003

The Committee noted that the Council had agreed to the BPA paying the Hotel Carina 10% of the deposit now to help further safeguard the accommodation for our national team at Gap. A sum of 300 Euros, being 10% of the full deposit of 3000 Euros, would therefore be paid by

bank transfer to the hotel. The balance of 2,700 Euros was due to be paid in February 2003.

Action: BPA Office

43.3 Page 2, item 33.4 Swoop Canopies competition

The Chairman reported that he had spoken to Steve Swallow of Target Skysports, Hibaldstow, who remained keen to host this competition. The arrangements already reported to previous meetings on coaching the weekend before, and on safety throughout, remained in place. All that was holding up final confirmation was the need to await approval of the DZ's application for planning permission to dig the necessary water trench. If there was any problem in gaining planning permission to dig a water trench, the coaching weekend with Pete Allum and Chris Lynch would still go ahead as planned, but the following weekend would comprise swoop accuracy through blades, etc. This would be strictly controlled for safety which, as always, was paramount. In summary, the event was sure to go ahead in some form.

Ongoing

Kate Charters reported that she had obtained another swoop canopies tape, together with rules, from Germany. She would send these on to John Hitchen. The rules included three different ways to score the competition.

44/02 Nationals 2002 - update

44.1 Artistic Disciplines/New Age Nationals

44.1.1 Judges

Pursuant to minute 34.1.1 of the meeting held on 29 May, the following statement had been posted on the BPA website:

The Competitions Committee has issued the following clarification of the published rules for the New Age Nationals 2002. There will be five rounds for A and four rounds for B. There will be a maximum of three judges. In the event of any disparity between the International Rules and the National Rules, the National Rules will apply.

Kate Charters said that there was such a shortage of judges in the Artistic Disciplines, it would not be possible to reach the maximum number of three. The only judge available, Dona Crum, had indicated that she would welcome the support of some more experienced judges. The Chairman said that one of the goals in the Action Plan was to increase the number of trained judges at all levels. Therefore, it would be possible to use funds designated for this target to bring in international judges in the Artistic Disciplines, provided they ran a seminar for trainee national judges. The Chairman said it was important for the Committee to provide proper support for Dona Crum, as it was unfair on all concerned – and not least Dona Crum herself – to expect her to attend her first major Artistic Disciplines event in the capacity of Chief Judge.

Paul Applegate therefore proposed, and Jim White seconded, a motion that the BPA should fund up to two international judges in the Artistic Disciplines to run a training seminar, and to judge, at the Artistic Disciplines Nationals 2002.

Carried unanimously

The Chairman confirmed that Sue Meacock of Peterborough Parachute Centre was in a position to make the necessary arrangements for the international judges to attend.

44.1.2 Number of rounds for selection ('Category A' competition only)

The category A competition at the Nationals had five rounds, compared with seven rounds at the World Championships. The minimum performance criterion for funding was a score equivalent to fourth place or better at the last World Championships. The lower number of rounds at the Nationals would be likely to give rise difficulty in interpreting this funding criterion fairly.

Paul Applegate therefore proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that, for Category A seniors, the top four teams *only* would jump an additional two rounds to bring their total number of rounds to seven, to match the number of rounds in the World Championships.

Carried unanimously

The number of rounds for all other competitors would remain as already published. The Office was asked to post a notice on the BPA website and to issue an amendment sheet to publicise the above decision.

Action: BPA Office

44.2 FS Nationals

The Chairman said he had received many e-mails about the timetable for the FS Nationals. These centred on the importance to the senior teams of the meet as the selection event for funding for the World Championships in Gap, France, in September 2003. 8-way team VNE was short of holidays and had sought assurance that their event was scheduled to start on the second Saturday. Some 4-way competitors had indicated they might want to be part of 8-way teams – this too would have scheduling implications. There followed a wide-ranging discussion about how best to try to meet everyone's needs. During this discussion, Bob Charters made the point that all competitors, be they seniors, intermediates or juniors, should have parity of treatment, and the timetable should not be recast to meet the needs of the seniors if that meant inconveniencing the juniors. The Chairman said that whatever was discussed tonight, the fact remained that the meet was at the mercy of the weather. Further, it would not be desirable, nor practicable, to seek to bind the Meet Director with edicts from this Committee. The Meet Director had a difficult job to do and had to be responsive to a range of factors, not least of which was the weather, on the day/s concerned.

With this as background, the Chairman said that the most the Committee could reasonably do was to set out some guiding principles that it would ask John Hitchen, as Meet Director, and the judges, to keep in mind. These were for (i) senior events to take priority, as it was a selection year; (ii) the 8-way to start in the morning of the second Saturday; and (iii) not to mix the 4-way and 8-way. However, these could be no more than guiding principles. The Committee was not seeking to compromise the discretion and flexibility of the Meet Director, which had to be left intact so he could be fully responsive to circumstances on the day. John Hitchen thanked the Committee for its mature understanding of the Meet Director's role.

In answer to e-mails from 4-way women's team *VMax*, who wished to make optimal use of their coaches' time, the Chairman confirmed that if the 4-way had not been completed by the end of the first weekend, it would be re-drawn. This was an existing rule that would continue to be honoured to ensure fair play, because options to waive it – which were discussed by the Committee at some length - were prone to complications. Consequently, the suggestion of waiving the rule requiring a re-draw failed to find a proposer.

Finally, the Chairman confirmed that Omniskore would be used for the FS Nationals, and that an excellent deal had been made with Ted Wagner that would effectively provide Omniskore free of charge, with only the shipping charge to and from the US to pay. The Chairman looked forward to his own visits to the FS Nationals, which he planned for both Sundays.

44.3 CF/Classics Nationals

The Chairman confirmed that he planned to visit the CF/Classics Nationals at some stage when they were held at Hinton from Saturday 7 to Wednesday 11 September 2002.

45/02 Regionals 2002

45.1 Classics Regionals

Kate Charters reported that the Northern and Southern Classics Regionals had been fine, with no problems. The number of entries had shown an increase on last year.

45.2 Artistic Disciplines Regionals

Unfortunately, the concept of Regionals in the Artistic Disciplines – which was being tried out for the first time this year – had not captured the interest of the jumpers. A re-run event at Hibaldstow - the Central Regionals - following a postponement due to bad weather, had attracted only two competitors, one of whom was the DZO's son! Steve Swallow had had to judge the event as Dona Crum had not been available on the rescheduled dates. The Northern Regionals in the Artistic Disciplines, held at Wild Geese in Northern Ireland, had unfortunately not attracted any advance entries. Kate Charters had arranged any competitors who arrived on the day to be judged remotely by the DZ sending a videotape to her, but in the event, the poor weather had yielded no entrants at all. There was one more Regional to come – the Southern Regionals to be held this coming weekend of 20-21 July at Netheravon – and then it would be time to take stock in the light of experiences this season.

45.3 FS Regionals

Both the FS Southern Regionals at Headcorn (11-12 May 2002) and the FS Central Regionals at Langar (6-7 July 2002) had been superb, with 23 and 21 teams entering respectively. These had been an all-time record entries for the Regionals, and the Committee believed that the BPA's highly successful programme of Skills Coaching Roadshows - which had now, in its second season, built up real drive and momentum - had played a significant part in generating this exceptional level of interest.

There followed a discussion about 4-way FS team *UBI Bodyflight*, which had team members serving with the Royal Air Force, who had been unable to get official clearance to travel to Northern Ireland. This meant that the team would be unable to take part in the FS Northern Regionals to be held at Wild Geese on 14-15 September 2002. The team had asked whether the dive sheet could be faxed to them after the draw, so they could see what standard they could accomplish at a mainland DZ. They had gone on to ask whether these dives could be scored. In discussion, Kate Charters said that whilst it would be fine for *UBI* to do the dives for their own satisfaction, it would not be fair to other competitors for them to be scored. It simply would not be a level playing field because of the different conditions at a different DZ: everything from the weather to the lack of the same atmosphere as at the real competition venue. The suggestion that *UBI*'s jumps should be scored therefore failed to find a proposer.

VNE had asked that the Committee consider including an FS 8-way event in next year's Regional circuit. The Chairman said that this would have to be held on a different weekend from the 4-way - probably the following weekend, as at the Nationals. The availability of judges was another factor to consider. The Chairman asked all Committee Members to help to explore and consult on whether the addition of an FS 8-way event at the FS Regionals was a feasible option, and to report back to the next meeting.

Action: All Committee Members

46/02 World Cup/European Championships , Empuriabrava, Spain: 4-13 October 2002

The Office was co-ordinating entry of the largest delegation the BPA had ever sent to a World Cup, estimated to be some 38 competitors plus officials and accompanying persons, bringing the total up to around 45. Already confirmed as entrants were *Quiksilver*, *4Pak*, *VMax* and *VNE* in FS, and a 4-way sequential and an 8-way speed CF team was also likely to register. Dona Crum planned to attend the trainee international judges' seminar in FS. In view of the size of the delegation, John Hitchen kindly offered to be the Head of Delegation, on a self-funded basis, and the Committee accepted his kind offer with gratitude. John Smyth had already agreed to be Delegation Manager, again on a self-funded basis. All members of the delegation (except for the judge's training, which was specifically covered by the current Action Plan) were therefore attending entirely at their own expense, including taking annual leave from work, so as to generate no cost to the BPA.

Unfortunately, the Committee had not heard from any of our top athletes in the Artistic Disciplines, apart from *Clockwork Orange* who were unfortunately not available. Although a late fee was payable for registration after 1 August, the Chairman still hoped that there would be UK entries in the Artistic Disciplines and would draft a note for the August issue of the Magazine to publicise the meet.

Action: Chairman

Bob Charters said he had declined to put his name forward as a World Cup judge. This was because the practice had emerged of the Chief Judge selecting judges of his or her own choice. This had effectively made judging at the World Cup a closed shop. Kate Charters had e-mailed Doris Merz-Hunziker (Chair, IPC Judges' Committee) to say it was not fair that the BPA was putting time, effort and funds into training up new International judges who might never get a look in. John Hitchen concurred with this analysis of a situation that gave him too great cause for concern. He believed it was all part of IPC's move towards paying judges a fee, which involved more centralisation and reducing the jury to only three judges. The Chairman said he would consult with the Chairman of Council to discuss what strategies the BPA might consider to seek to open up the ranks of international judging and reverse the apparent trend of it becoming the preserve of the select few.

Action: Chairman

47/02 Skills Coaching Roadshows for Junior and Intermediate Athletes

47.1 FS

There had been a fantastic level of support for FS Roadshows, which had been superb: a major success in the encouragement of competitors and for the sport generally. The Chairman thanked Jim White, FS Discipline Rep, the coaches and the host DZs for their hard work and support that had made this possible. The benefit was clearly showing through in the new junior teams that had registered for the Nationals and the Regionals.

47.2 CF

Ian Marshall reported that a CF Coaching Roadshow, which had included 2 camera coaches, had been held at Hinton over the weekend of 5 - 7 July 2002, with some 27 juniors and intermediates attending. The jumpers had asked for the Roadshow to be extended to the following weekend and this had duly been arranged. There had been 175 descents in total over 3 days of jumping. Two trainee coaches had nearly completed their training at the event. The Chairman thanked *Team X*, who had kindly provided the coaching free-of-charge under the usual expenses-only arrangement that applied to all BPA Coaching Roadshows. The Chairman also thanked Ian Marshall who had arranged the event, and Richard Hayden of Hinton for his hospitality and for being especially supportive of the ethos of the Roadshow.

The Committee then gave a vote of thanks to Richard Hayden for his help in preparing and giving out to those at the Roadshow an introductory pamphlet and CD which he had very kindly produced at his own expense.

Ian Marshall said the event had been fantastic and an article and photographs had been submitted to *Skydive Mag*. Most of those attending had been fun jumpers, but he hoped that events of this nature would bring about the re-birth of CF. After the Roadshow, the operators at Hinton had even reduced the jump price for anyone doing coaching jumps for CF1. This was one of a number of positive signs that were emerging at the moment, auguring well for the future.

47.3 New Age / Artistic Disciplines

Unfortunately, some confusion had arisen over the funding arrangements for Coaching Roadshows in the Artistic Disciplines. This centred on the option of a host DZ engaging its own coaches on a normal commercial basis, who were coaching concurrently with the BPA coaches. Only the BPA coaches were therefore governed by the principles of a BPA Coaching Roadshow. These principles were that coaching was provided free of charge, with coaches being current or former national champions or senior competitors, who kindly provided their services without charge to put something back into the sport. BPA coaches were entitled to reclaim only their out-of-pocket expenses as a subsistence allowance at the standard BPA rate. Because this was an expenses allowance, it was not taxable income.

DZs hosting a Coaching Roadshow were, of course, free to engage their own coaches on the usual commercial basis. These coaches charged normal coaching fees.

The first Artistic Disciplines Coaching Roadshow had been held at Sibson over the weekend 13 - 14 July 2002. Some of the jumpers being coached had reportedly not even realised that

a BPA Coaching Roadshow was on, and may well therefore have assumed that the coaching taking place was simply part the usual activities at the DZ. This confusion over fees had unfortunately generated a certain amount of misunderstanding, and had dissuaded Paul Applegate (Discipline Rep) and Nigel Holland (Assistant to the Discipline Rep) from attending, which had not helped.

After further discussion, the Chairman said he would issue a statement to clarify the position with the intention of avoiding doubt at future Roadshows.

Action: Chairman

The Chairman confirmed that he believed Coaching Roadshows in the Artistic Disciplines had the potential for great success. The Chairman of Council's suggestions (tabled) for providing more guidance to coaches were noted with thanks.

Action: Paul Applegate and Nigel Holland

The Chairman said he would contact Chris Lynch, who was a potential coach for the second BPA Artistic Disciplines Skills Coaching Roadshow, to be held at Target Skysports, Hibaldstow, over the weekend 7 – 8 September, to clarify the position in advance about the arrangements that applied to BPA Roadshow coaches.

Action: Chairman

47.4 The classics disciplines of style and accuracy

The Chairman (Classics Rep) said he hoped to arrange a Skills Coaching Roadshow in the Classics disciplines for the weekend of 31 August – 1 September 2002, this being the weekend immediately ahead of the CF/Classics Nationals. Dave Ballard and Julian Spencer had agreed to act as coaches under the usual expenses-only arrangements. The Chairman asked Ian Marshall kindly to find out whose tuffet Hinton would be using, and whether they would be able to set it up for the weekend immediately prior to the Nationals so it was available for the Coaching Roadshow.

Action: Ian Marshall

47.5 Coaching Roadshow Feedback Form 217

The Committee noted that the feedback form on Coaching Roadshows (BPA Form 217) was proving to be very useful in capturing timely and accurate data for the BPA's records. At the suggestion of Ian Marshall, the form was now downloadable from the BPA website.

Completed forms received by the Committee had included a number of ideas and suggestions. The Committee now considered these, as follows.

- *It would be useful for the BPA to encourage a discounted rate for 5-way (Craig Cunningham, 4Pak).*

Answer: The Committee said that jump charges had to be left to the discretion of the host DZO. It was for the team to negotiate with the DZ, perhaps on the basis that a discounted rate might be a good investment as a loss leader for the DZ!

- *Please consider funding the ferry costs of a turbine (Brian Dyas, Skydive St Andrews).*

Answer: The Committee was sorry, but its budget could not be stretched that far!

- *Include a trip to the wind tunnel in Paris so that Category 8's can get some really good one-on-one (Calvin Blacker, Junior 4-way FS team Elemental, based at Hibaldstow).*

Answer: The Committee saw a possibility in keen jumpers negotiating with coaches to arrange such a trip, but unfortunately the limit of any possible financial involvement by the BPA might at the most be to fund the travel of approved coaches from home to their point of disembarkation from the UK, and vice versa. But this would be a great idea as and when a wind tunnel opens in the UK.

48/02 Coaching for senior teams

This was progressing well, with the coaching fees of the eligible teams being paid by the BPA to a maximum of £2K per team (minute 17 refers). The Committee had received letters of thanks for the BPA's support from teams XL, VMax and VNE.

49/02 Judging matters

Kate Charters reported that three judges would be out of the UK during the next couple of months. Bob Charters would be judging at a memorial meet in Russia (this was an FAI class 1 event, on which he would prepare a report for the Committee); Bob King at the Accuracy World Cup; and Roger Flinn was to be the chief judge in CF at the World Cup in Spain. Whilst it was excellent to see UK-based judges with such a high profile on the international scene, it would inevitably leave us short of judges at home.

Kate Charters then reported that Frank Mallabone, who lived in Suffolk, had kindly volunteered to look after the BPA's ground-to-air video camera. This would include transporting it to and from competitions, as well as maintenance. The Committee was very grateful for this offer, which it accepted with thanks, subject to the Office clarifying the position on insurance cover for the camera.

Action: BPA Office

The Committee asked that, as the custodian of the BPA's ground-to-air video camera, Frank Mallabone should report direct to Kate Charters in her capacity as Judges' Co-ordinator. Jim White also kindly offered his help as required with the ground-to-air video camera, and to help to train Frank Mallabone. The Chairman thanked Jim White for his kind offer.

The stock of judges' logbooks held by the Office was now almost depleted. The existing design was over 20 years old, and Kate Charters tabled a new page layout that would better meet current needs. She asked that this should be printed for use in a loose-leaf ring binder rather than as a bound booklet as before. The Committee agreed to this change and asked the office to arrange for the new judges' logbooks to be typeset and, after approval of the proof by Kate Charters, printed.

Action: BPA Office

Kate Charters had run a very intensive judges' training seminar at the Scottish Nationals earlier this summer. Trainee CF and Accuracy judge Dave McLagan had written to the Competitions Chairman to compliment Kate Charters on her sterling work on the organisation of the training, which had included arranging for judges to be rotated to allow everyone to get an insight into the judging skills for each discipline. He said he had been particularly grateful for the way that Kate Charters had enabled the trainees to get a real insight into judging by sharing with them her wealth of national and international experience. The Chairman said that Dave McLagan's comments were echoed by the entire Competitions Committee.

50/02 Mandatory use of AADs in France

Ian Marshall said he understood that it was now mandatory to wear an AAD to jump in France. He questioned whether this requirement would be applied to CF and Accuracy jumpers at the World Championships in Gap in September 2003, or whether there might be any exemption. The office would investigate and report back.

Action: BPA Office

51/02 Insurance for international competitors

The unfortunate case of a British jumper who had recently been injured on a jump in Spain had reminded Ian Marshall to emphasise the importance of the Committee ensuring that all our international competitors had full medical insurance and repatriation cover. Sometimes repatriation cover was an optional extra on medical insurance policies, but it was absolutely essential for all competitors to have it. The Committee wholeheartedly supported Ian Marshall's wise reminder.

Action: BPA Office

It would be a matter for the Council to consider whether further reminders about this to other jumpers, outside the purview of the Competitions Committee, might be appropriate.

52/02 Taking a Cypres on a US commercial airline

Paul Applegate reported that, as part of the increased security restrictions arising from the events of 11 September, American Airlines would no longer accept the carriage of a Cypres AAD on their flights, even if it was stowed in the hold. This was because they classified it as an explosive device. The Committee noted this but it was a matter for the full Council to consider whether it would be appropriate for the BPA to check on the position with other airlines.

Action: Refer to the Council

53/02 Date of next meeting

Wednesday 14 August 2002 at 1830 at the BPA Office, Leicester.

The meeting closed at 2055.