



Issue 12

July 2009

NEWS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer break, such as it is, for the new season will soon be upon us. Before then, however, we have the Association Tournament (18th/19th July at Burton-on-Trent TTC). If you intend participating please contact Derek Sherrat (01889 882662). It was a good event last year and should be better this year. Also there is the AGM to be held at Bulkington, (9th August). I would encourage as many as possible to attend. The Association is going from strength to strength as the Secretary's report shows.

I would like to offer my congratulations to the Chairman, Vice Chairman and the Management Committee on their recent election. Also congratulation to John Hard-castle on reaching the National Umpire status - well done John!

Some of you will know that one of our members was subjected to verbal abuse by a player at a British League match. The incident was reported and taken to a disciplinary hearing and I am pleased to report that the player concerned was found guilty. Umpires should not have to accept this treatment.

The ETTA AGM was held recently and was well attended. No surprise as the main issue was that of Individual Registration. This has been ongoing for some time, with the final version being put to the vote at the AGM. The proposal was accepted by the AGM (2781 votes for, 6161 votes against) to be introduced for the 2010/2011 season, as expected. The decision as to who should fix the fees was subject to an amendment. The original proposal was that the fees should be decided by the National Council. The amendment should be proposed by the National Council but approved by the AGM. The amendment was carried (2100 votes for, 6980 votes against).

The Annual report was discussed at some length, with much criticism levelled at publicity, ranging from ETTA website to Table Tennis News. So much so that one prominent Councillor prompted a round of applause by saying that such negative remarks should be made at National Council not at the AGM.

There have been many complaints from members that there has not been an ETTA Handbook for Umpires produced for sometime, and I was interested to read in the NURC Report: "The ETTA Handbook for Umpires was also updated but publication deferred pending the outcome of the ITTF AGM at which several possible law changes will be considered." I asked and was assured that it would be ready and available for umpires at the beginning of the 2009/10 season.

If I may conclude on a personal note, I was surprised, pleased and honoured to be made a Vice-President of the ETTA. Surprised because I did not consider my contribution to table-tennis has been as great as many others; pleased and honoured because my contribution has been mainly in the field of umpiring, and I would like to think that it is umpiring that has been recognised and honoured.

I look forward to seeing you at the tournament, AGM or on the circuit next season.

George Tyler

NEWS FROM THE SECRETARY

The last few months have seen the election of the Chair of the ETTA and the Commonwealth Championships in Glasgow. Both events created a great deal of interest for different reasons. Alex Murdoch was challenged by Alan Ransome for position of Chairman. Both candidates presented manifestos covering all areas of business for the ETTA and both candidates made promises to improve the status and working environment of the umpires. Alex won the election and it will be interesting to see if he maintains his election promises.

The selection of the umpires for the Glasgow Commonwealth Championships caused some controversy. The event took place and received some good publicity; however the umpires schedule caused some concern. The next major event is the English Open in October. Hopefully this event will have sufficient umpires and an efficient working schedule.

After the controversy over the selection process for the Commonwealth Championships I wrote to the Chair of the NURC highlighting the umpires concern over the lack of clarity over the selection process and suggesting that the process should be brought up to date in accordance with the agreement from the joint AETTU/NURC meeting last year. To date this hasn't happened.

The question of umpires' uniform hasn't yet been settled. At the moment the NURC has not published its decision on the subject but umpires want to know what is happening and do not like the uncertainty. There is an exercise in progress by the ITTF to try to find a world-wide supplier of clothing for a range of ITTF officials, and it is believed the NURC are waiting to see if this lead to a cheap and reliable source of umpires' uniforms. This is very good for the ITTF Uniform and officials but the vast majority of English umpires want to keep their royal blue blazers and English badge for domestic events

The AETTU tournament is taking place at Burton - on -Trent on 18th/19th July 2009. The week-end should be a good event with everyone having a good time trying to build reputations and trying to beat the 2008 Champions. Faith Brown, Ken Armson's partner has donated a trophy, in memory of Ken, to the tournament and will be in attendance to present the trophy to the winner of the open event.

The 2009 AGM is taking place on **Sunday 9th August** 2009 at the Bulkington Village Centre, Nr Nuneaton, Warwickshire. It will be nice to see as many members possible at the AGM.

Tom Purcell
Secretary AETTU

CHAIRMAN HONOURED

Our Chairman, George Tyler was honoured by the ETTA at the recent AGM in Birmingham, in creating George a Vice-President of the Association the citation covered George's distinguished service for the NURC and his umpiring activities at all levels over the past 30 years.

I would like to offer George my sincere congratulations for his above honour and I am sure I speak for all members of our Association. (ED)

BEST WISHES TO WILF RHODES AND STAN CLARKE

Our thoughts go out to two of our stalwart members who have both recently suffered mild strokes. Stan Clarke and Wilf Rhodes are on the mend and I am sure we will see both of them at events this coming season. Best wishes for a speedy and complete recovery.

ASSOCIATION AGM

The Association AGM will be held on Sunday 9th August at: Bulkington Village Centre, School Road, Bulkington, Bedworth, Warwickshire. If anyone requires directions etc. they can contact me on (02476) 387766 or e-mail geoff.taylor2@btopenworld.com. I will send them directions by return post.

MINUTES FROM AETTU COMMITTEE MEETING SATURDAY 28th MARCH 2009

Present: George Tyler (GT), Derek Sherratt (DS), Tom Purcell (TP), Steve Welch (SW), Geoff Taylor (GTay)

- 1. Apologies: John Lawton, Nick Osland, Barry Granger, Stan Clarke**
- 2. Matters arising from Committee meeting 28/11/08**
 - (a) Copy of Constitution to be circulated to members with February copy of magazine.**

G Taylor reported that this had taken place.
 - (b) AETTU umpires' discs to be circulated to members with February copy of the magazine.**

G Taylor reported that this had not taken place. After consideration it was believed that the metal discs may affect the cost of postage and affect the PO sorting machines. It was agreed to continue distributing the discs at tournaments.

(c) TP to write to Colin Clemett suggesting umpires' training Powerpoint to be distributed to County Umpires Secretaries for use in recruitment and training.

TP reported that he had e-mailed CC and the Powerpoint was being prepared for use in training.. CC agreed to circulate it after it was completed.

(d) TP to contact ETTA for update on SS's recommendations.

TP reported that he had e-mailed Rob Sinclair who reported that the ETTA had submitted a financial report for funding including funding for Match Officials, including umpires, based on SS's report. The ETTA was waiting for a decision.

(e) TP to write Secretary of NC for clarity over blazer badges.

TP reported that he had contacted Rob Sinclair who reported that no decision had been made over the blazer badge. This would be considered when the question of umpires' blazers was discussed by NC at a later date after a report from NURC.

(f) TP to write to Rob Sinclair to be included in circulation list of NC and NURC meeting minutes.

TP contacted SC and is now included in the circulation of NC and NURC minutes.

(g) Junior Membership.

To be recommended at the 2009 AGM.

(h) Membership reminder to be included in the February magazine

GTay reported that this had not happened. Reminder to be included in the July magazine.

(i) TP to circulate survey re umpires' uniform.

Survey circulated. See results in agenda item.

(j) TP to contact SS about review of selection policy.

E-mail sent to Stuart Sherlock. See agenda item 8.

3. Chairman's Report.

The Chair reported on the recent re-election of Alex Murdoch and hoped that a better relationship would be created between the ETTA and AETTU. Chair was concerned about the attitude of the NURC over recent months and the fact that it was failing to carry out actions agreed with the AETTU in particular the change to uniforms and the selection process. Membership of the AETTU continued to grow and the Chair suggested that the committee membership should be given responsibility for areas within the country so that members would have a closer relationship with the committee and the role could act as a gateway for receiving and circulating information to members. There was a general discussion on the subject and it was agreed to discuss further at the next meeting.

4. Secretary's Report.

TP reported that it had been a busy period since the last meeting with concerns over the possible change to the umpires' uniform and the selection process being questioned by a number of umpires. The members' survey on the question of uniform had overwhelmingly in favour of keeping the ETTA uniform for domestic events and the ITTF uniform for overseas events (73%) The subject was to be discussed at the next NURC meeting in April. TP reported the incident in February when Denis Neal had abused Ray Lavin during a tournament at Widnes. Ray had made a formal complaint to the ETTA and the matter was being dealt with under the ETTA discipline procedure.

5. Treasurer's Report.

SW produced an account and balance sheet to the meeting which showed a balance of £1.666. There was a general discussion about the balance sheet which was accepted.

There was then a general discussion about membership. Two members were no longer umpiring and wished to be removed from the membership list. It was agreed that a few members who still owed their 2008-09 membership fee would be contacted and reminded about the outstanding fees.

6. Uniforms.

TP reported that approximately 73% of the members in the recent AETTU survey had voted to keep the light blue English uniform while approximately 25% had voted to change to a mixture of ITTF and English and 1% had voted for a complete change to the ITTF uniform. These results have been sent to the members of the NURC and Secretary of the ETTA. TP believed that the result of the survey and the NURC survey would be discussed at the next NURC meeting in April and reported to the NC. There was a general discussion on the subject and the fact that light blue blazers could be obtained from at least 3 suppliers around the country. TP showed a sample of the blazer badge which could be obtained from one of the suppliers at a cost of approximately £5.00. The meeting agreed to wait until the results of the surveys before any further decisions or recommendations are made.

7. Selection

There was a general discussion about the current selection policy employed by the NURC. DS commented that many umpires, including him, were unhappy with the process. He had written to SS to voice his concerns and had received a letter from SS claiming that the process was carried out without favour but could have been handled better. TP reported that he had written to the NURC voicing the concerns of the membership and pointing out that the joint AETTU/ NURC meeting had recommended that the selection policy should be reviewed and updated. The NURC had failed to acknowledge or answer the e-mail. After discussion it was suggested that the matter would probably be discussed at the next NURC meeting and that NFA would be taken at this stage pending the outcome of the NURC meeting.

8. Umpires' Tournament

It was agreed that the Umpires Tournament would take place at the Uxbridge TT Centre, Burton-on-Trent over the week-end of 18th-19th July 2009. TP informed the meeting that Ken Armson's partner, Faith Brown, had agreed to donate a

trophy, in Ken's name to the winner of the Umpires Open competition. After a general discussion it was agreed to invite Faith to present the trophy at the tournament and pay her, B & B expenses.

9. Magazine

GTay reported that the magazine had been circulated in February and he was now looking for articles for the next edition which was due to be circulated around June/July 2009. GTay reported that the magazine could do with articles from other members rather than the usual few. DS suggested that members could supply details to a section of the magazine called "On court notes" . Rather than larger articles members could supply smaller pieces of interest to the magazine which in turn would be circulated. It was agreed that the next edition of the magazine would be circulated early July and the closing date for articles would be 14th June 2009.

10 Annual General Meeting.

The 2009 Annual General Meeting would be held at 14.00hrs on Sunday 9th August 2009. A committee meeting would take place at 12.00hrs before the AGM. The AGM will take place the same place as last year Bulkington Village Centre in Warwickshire. Maps, directions etc. can be obtained from Geoff Taylor.

11. Any other business.

(a) CRB Checks.

GTay reported the renewal of CRB Certificates were now due and that although the ETTA would pay the cost of obtaining a new certificate and renewals, the firm processing the applications was recommending the forms and documents should be sent by registered post at a cost of approximately £10.00 GT stated that when the original applications were they were sent by ordinary post. There was a general discussion about the subject and it was agreed that it was up to the individual umpires which form of post they wished to use. It was also pointed out that the ETTA CRB certificate did not guarantee acceptance by other organisations.

(b) Tournaments Assessments.

DS reported that he had received a few tournament assessments forms from members and so far only one tournament, the London GP, had received very critical comment about the working conditions and hours. SW stated that the London GP had been discussed at the Tournaments Committee and the AETTU assessment form had been valuable when discussing the organisation of that tournament.

Meeting finished at 15:45hrs

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On 21st February 2009 at the British League weekend at Halton TT Centre, Cheshire. An incident occurred where Ray Lavin, Lancashire CU, was verbally abused by a player after he had been warned and penalised for foul serving. The player continued to abuse the umpire and was given a red/yellow card penalty. As a result of the abuse Ray made a complaint to the ETTA and on Saturday 30th May 2009 an ETTA disciplinary hearing took place in London. After hearing all the evidence the complaint was upheld and the player was fined £250".

AETTU 2009 Tournament

The 2009 AETTU Table Tennis Tournament will be played on the weekend of 18th/19th July at the Burton Uxbridge Table Tennis Centre, Robert Sutton School, Burton-on-Trent. Play will commence at 13.00hrs on Saturday. The number of events will depend on the number of persons entering the competition. The whole event should finish about 17.00hrs on Sunday. There will be an evening meal on the Saturday at a local restaurant when all will be welcome.

Overnight accommodation will be at the Premier Hotel, Bretford Road, Burton-on-Trent at a cost of £48 per twin room. Breakfast will be extra at a cost of £7.35 for full English or £5.50 Continental.

Last year's tournament was very successful although it did take a few umpires sometime to recover from the week-end.

Derek Sherratt is arranging the venue, hotel and restaurant but obviously we need to know asap how many persons will be attending the event, entering the competition, staying at the hotel and requiring the evening meal.

At this stage I cannot give you an exact cost for the week-end but based upon the number of umpires who attended last year I think it will be in the region of £40 per person and this will include, hire of venue, B&B, breakfast, trophies and refreshments during the event. The evening meal will be extra.

Last years tournament was very enjoyable. We saw some good table tennis played, had a good laugh and collected enough stories and bull s"t to fill a library, I will circulate further details re the venue and hotel nearer to the date.

In order that I can have an idea about numbers can colleagues please e-mail me asap and let me know if you will attending the tournament. We want to set a closing date at the beginning of June so that Derek can start to arrange things

CRB CERTIFICATES

Please have a look at the ETTA website re. CRB Certificates. From the 1st April 2009 the ETTA will not be accepting CRB Certificates from other organisations; however, such Certificates which have currently been accepted by the ETTA will be valid for 3 years from the date of acceptance. Officials will then have to obtain a separate ETTA approved CRB Certificate to work with the ETTA.

This article in the magazine is going to become a regular feature. We want input from members - not long articles - but short items that you see happening while at tournaments, your local league matches or anything else you may think that will be of interest to other members. You can either send them to me or Derek Sherratt. Looking forward to hearing from you.

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The officials appointed for the twin internationals on February 24th were Steve Welch (Referee), David and Betty Brown, Peter Edwards, Ken Eliot, John Hardcastle, John Mackey, Tom Purcell and Karen Tonge.

English Umpires at the Commonwealth TT Championships in Glasgow were D. Edwards, M. Strode, D. Brown, A Harwood, K. Tonge, M. Fraser, L Reid, S. Clarke, R Williamson and D. Sherratt

David Edwards officiated at the German Open in Bremen 19/22 March.

John Mackey was the only English umpire to travel to Japan for the World Championships at the end of April.

It was a relaxed Chairman and Mrs Tyler that returned to a windy Lincolnshire after their short stay in Lanzarote towards the end of March. Two days later he was in the chair at the AETTU Meeting in Coventry; 'no rest for the wicked'....

Comments suggest that the problem usually experienced at the under 11/14 Championships have largely been resolved. Pity the same could not be said for the London Grand Prix where it was nearly a case of the midnight oil.

The U11-14 Championships were well organised and it ran fine. Dave Cochrane did very well for his first National Tournament and he and his top table committee did their best to let the umpires go who had the furthest to travel. It was a very enjoyable tournament.

It will be lovely to see Faith Brown (our late Secretary's partner) who will be at our tournament to present a cup that she has donated to the Association in memory of Ken and it will be played for annually.

I have heard that at our tournament we are having a hard bat competition and also a competition with a 44mm ball. I wonder if it will be a competition with players using hard bats and the bigger balls, if so it could be rather good to see who the real players are. Not ones playing with illegal rubbers.

OBITUARY

DAVID POULTNEY 1943 - 2009

David was a familiar figure on the domestic umpiring scene for many years both in his own locality and wider afield. Already a County umpire, he qualified as a National Umpire in 1986 and became an International Umpire four years later. David officiated at all levels from World Championships to his local league. His somewhat shy self effacing manner was in direct contrast to his no nonsense approach as an umpire. His appearance at all events reduced as his health deteriorated and he will be remembered by his colleagues with fond affection.

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ETTA UNDER 11-14 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

I received an e-mail from Dave Cochrane who was Referee for the above event. He sent it to umpires who were working at the event and I am not sure if everyone can receive e-mails who were there so it is for you. I would like to share it with all umpires as I think it was a great gesture on his behalf, it is not very often we receive thanks in this way.

Hi all

I would like to give huge thanks for the amazing performance you all put on throughout the event.

As all of you know it was my first National event as main referee and I won't deny I was a bit nervous.

I much appreciated the words of support and encouragement from you whilst talking to you in the umpire's area.

Events like this do not work due to one person, the umpires play a very big part and it's because you all scored 11 out of 10 that the event was a huge success. Keep up the good work!!!!

I look forward to working with you all somewhere out there soon.

Kind regards

Dave Cochrane (Referee)

Are they getting away with 'bloody' murder?

Briefings usually refer to the question of misbehaviour and highlights items that may affect an opponent, spectators or bring the game into disrepute. One can divide offending items into two categories, physical or oral.

The first one is straightforward, hitting the ball out of the playing area or kicking the table or surrounds for example. It's just the case of the umpire witnessing the crime and taking the appropriate action.

When it comes to oral matters however the situation becomes a little more complicated. Whilst disrespect of match officials should also be obvious, whatever language is used, misbehaviour which involves abusive language can be much more difficult to detect if the umpire is not well versed in the particular language being spoken.

The language problem also affects questions under 'advice' and I have previously made out a case for some appraisal of the umpire's duties in this respect. In the majority of cases involving abusive language we really mean swearing; this opens up a new can of worms.

What the offending words mean when used in everyday life is up to the individual, his or her upbringing and background and hence its cultural significance. What might be regarded as a swear word in Ethiopia might be perfectly acceptable to the inhabitants of the Windward Islands. Similarly an oath from Northern England may not be readily recognised in Kent.

On court however, the umpire has to form his opinion in the context of the match situation; and with very little time in which to do so. To reiterate my Title therefore, it could be that one player might be penalised whilst the other escapes with a bemused look from the umpire.

One other factor is the cultural background of the umpire. An umpire, who is, say deeply religious, might interpret something distasteful in a word or action that a second umpire would ignore. This introduces an element of the lottery.

I have avoided the area of political correctness, and have deliberately left to the last the tricky question 'what is a swear word'? The BBC offer guidelines (forget Mr. Ross) on the various categories and these include sex, race and religious themes to name but three.

One also has to remember that some Anglo Saxon words are now taboo in polite circles whereas some words like blimey, strewth damn which were once frowned upon now pass unnoticed. This illustrates that things do change with time.

The word profanity describes a word, expression or gesture which can be interpreted as insulting, rude or vulgar. Such words may be cuss, curse, oath, swearing, expletive, dirty word and strong, irreverent, obscene and blasphemous language. Although of a different mode an umpire should also be seeking to curb bombastic behaviour.

In my experience that most on court language abuse is really cathartic swearing; for instance, when something bad happens to the offender, ie. an edge ball resulting in the loss of a point. Physio analysts will tell us this is purely a display of negative emotion. The word is not usually directed at an opponent or match official. It is what I might do if I hit my finger with a hammer or discover on arrival at the hotel or venue that I had forgotten to pack my blue blazer.

Sometimes the referee's briefing will include a recommendation that if the offensive language is not really audible the umpire might deal with the situation with a quiet word, particularly if it occurs on a outer court. This to my mind suggests an element, justice must be seen to be done, if in front of the Civic Party or the match is being televised.

Whether the language is good or bad it involves a value judgement which is social rather than linguistic. An umpire needs to call on all his or her experience and training if true justice is to be administered.

Derek Sherratt

BAGGAGE.

This thorny question came into focus again recently at the English Closed Championships in Sheffield.

The Referee's Briefing Note stated "try to avoid having bags on the court". Those of you who have partaken in the upper echelon of competitions will be familiar with this dictum or more draconian, and it frequently promotes debate as to the logistical problems facing umpires as they proceed to court.

The ITTF handbook for Match Officials list the essential items:- Net measure, Balls, Stop watch, Cards, Tossing disc, Score sheet and pen.

Added to this you might include a duster and scissors, schedule of Authorised Racket coverings. Umpires work schedule and other literature issued by the Organiser including the Official Programme (and if lucky a bottle of water).

The situation faced by umpires is not always as straightforward as it seems. If there is not a secure room or secure area provided for officials there is the question of where to leave other personal things. Many choose to keep their eyes on these items and therefore carry a bag onto court.

The size and shape of the bags varies in the extreme: from something that you might see at Heathrow to one containing toothpaste and shaving cream. The smaller ones can easily be hidden within the score machine, or if a little larger, under the umpire's table.

Whatever size however, they are usually visible to all present *en route* to the court, and this affects the senses of some referees more than others. What might be acceptable at a

Grand Prix, where the umpire's belongings are insignificant amongst the luggage brought onto court by a player would certainly be *non grata* at more prestigious events. Curious though, the security motives of players and umpires are similarly uppermost in the mind.

One has to bear in mind that the umpire is sometimes on court for two to three hours and this brings other considerations into the frame. Water and medical requisites, especially if diabetes is involved, come immediately to mind.

Other artefacts might include;
Mobile Phone (switched off), Camera, Ipod, Spare items of clothing, Kit Kat, Soap and towel, Tissue wipes and even toilet paper, Sun tan lotion, Rubber and blade just purchased, Cosmetics, Newspaper, book or magazine, Small liquid equilibrium device? Alright a spirit level, something for the Week-end!!!

The mind boggles and no doubt we can all add to this collection.

The 'Powers that be' would have umpires entering the court unencumbered; nothing sticking out of the top pocket, no bulging pockets and nothing hanging around the neck.

Answers on a post card please.

Derek Sherrat (Baggage Handler)

BLUE BLAZERS

As you are aware the decision has yet to be made about the use of Royal Blue Umpires' jacket. The overwhelming decision of the ETTA umpires is that we should retain the The Royal Blue English Blazer for domestic events and use the Navy Blue ITTF uniform for overseas and ITTF events.

The NURC has yet to make a recommendation as a result of its survey but based on its initial recommendation if the English Blazer is to be changed it will be over a number of years.

One of the reasons for the NURC recommendation was the alleged difficulty in obtaining supplies of the Royal Blue Blazer and the "Three Lions" badge. However, the AETTU has maintained that there are suppliers around the country who can supply the royal blue blazers and badge. As a result of members enquiries we have established that the following firms can supply the Royal Blue Blazers and three lions badge.

The two firms who have been identified are as follows.

1. Pret Apparel, Mitre Court, Cutlers Heights Lane, Bradford BD4 9JY Telephone 01274 - 688900. (Contact Mrs Leigh Perfitt).
2. Anglia Bowls, 1 Beckham Place, Edwards Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR3 3DZ. Telephone 01603 - 632090 e.mail:- mailorder@anglia bowls.co.uk.

The Jackets from the two suppliers can be obtained in the following manner:-

1. Pret Apparel. The jackets are supplied from 36" - 68" chests in Long, Medium or Short fittings. Orders can be taken over the phone with payment accepted by Cheque, credit card or debit card. The cost of the jacket is £69 + Vat. The firm also supplies the "three lions" English blazer badge at a cost of £8 + Vat. Umpires requiring jackets should first visit a local clothes shop and obtain their correct size eg 44" Medium.

Then contact Pret Apparel and order the jacket which for their purposes is known as a "Henley Blazer - Royal Blue". After taking the payment the firm will send the blazer to you. If for some reason the jacket supplied is not a good fit it can be returned and replaced provided it has not been altered.

Pret Apparel can also supply "three lions" English blazer badges for the blazers. The badges will be supplied separately from the blazer and umpires will have to arrange for them to be sewn onto the blazer. Umpires only buying the blazer badge must realise that the badge material may be a slightly different shade of blue from their own jacket.

Pret Apparel can also supply can also supply royal blue V - neck sweaters with the "three lions" embroidered badge at a cost of £15.50 + Vat.

2. Anglia Bowls from Norwich also supply royal blue blazers at a cost of £75 + Vat. The firm can also supply the ETTA badge at a cost of £16 + Vat. The firm may be able to reduce the cost of the badges to about £8 but only if someone was to order batches of 20 +badges.

The above details are forwarded for your information. The two main things to remember before you buy a jacket are:

- a) Make sure you obtain your correct jacket size before you order it.
- b) Do not alter the jacket or sew on the badge until satisfied with the blazer. If you do the firm will not accept it back because they will not be able to re-sell it.