

A.E.T.T.U.

**ASSOCIATION OF
ENGLISH
TABLE TENNIS
UMPIRES**

Issue 3

February 2006

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Following the rejection of our request for recognition and my subsequent conversation with Alex Murdoch. I was told it is the intention of Mancom to change the terms of reference of the NURC to state that the NURC will be responsible for the welfare and interests of umpires, a remit which it has steadfastly refused to accept until the formation of the Association.

As the NURC is appointed by and responsible to Mancom our committee believes that umpires should have some say in who represents them and who is responsible for their welfare and interests. To this end I would urge each member to complete and return the enclosed form stating that you do not wish your welfare and interests to be represented by an appointed body by the Association which you have formed with officers which you elected.

You should also know that National Council confirmed the Mancom decision and that there was no information provided regarding the Association's request for recognition, consequently I would urge you to write to your County Association requesting they discuss this issue and mandate Councillor to ask for full information at the next National Council meeting in April.

We are told that umpires are 'volunteers' and there are many volunteers. The Committee believe, and have put as part of their request for recognition that umpires are a special group of volunteers who have to be trained, qualified and told what to wear (at their own expense).

For many years there has been a call for an umpires association. We now have one, you formed it, you joined it. Our aim is to work with ETTA Ltd., to work with the NURC and serve English table tennis as best we can. We are here and here we intend to stay, with or without recognition .

George Tyler CHAIRMAN AETTU

Remember this is your magazine and what I need is input. When I took over the job of magazine I thought this will be an easy job as most umpires I know always have opinions and now I find no one has a lot to say. Apart from one or two people it seems I will be writing the magazine on my own. So those of you who do like a joke or a little controversy I would love to hear from you. any items you have I will receive with open arms.

Editor

FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

The main topic at present and one that should be of concern to all umpires has to be the rejection of our request for recognition and the manner in which this was put to the National Council. Possibly of greater importance was the decision of the National Councillors to endorse the Mancom decision when not in possession of the facts. Link this to the rejection of our request for Good Standing and the impression these two rejections give is that few outside our Association are aware of the concerns of the umpires. We know the NURC are aware of these but as an ETTA sub committee they can only work within their terms of reference. If any suggestion or submission put forward by the NURC is rejected it will end there.

We are not going to go away, neither must we allow a stumble at the first hurdle to prevent us from pursuing our aims; those aims are the welfare and interests of umpires. Your committee intend to sensibly pursue our request for recognition but in doing so we need to know and want Mancom to know we have your full support. As a direct result of our first meeting with representatives of Mancom they are seeking to resolve our claim for recognition by adding welfare of umpires to the terms of reference of the NURC. Possibly they are hoping this will appease AETTU members. We should ask ourselves why have they adopted this stance? What is it about our Association that gives rise to concern? Are they concerned at the prospect of having to deal with an independent body? The Association is not anti NURC neither is it in opposition to the NURC, but it is pro umpire, the aims and welfare of its members being its only concern.

Why is recognition so important? Recognition will open lines of communication and enable us to enter into formal and meaningful dialogue that will ultimately be of benefit to members. Progress at any level will not be achieved overnight and members will know this. Only by continued and reasonable dialogue can your aims be achieved and it is for this reason your support as a member is vital.

Currently Mancom say the Rules do not allow them to recognise an association such as the AETTU but to the best of my knowledge the rules do not make any such reference.

Your visible support that will enable the Association to achieve recognition and actively negotiate on your behalf is vital and I would urge to complete and sign the enclosed form and return it to me or any other Officer or Committee member.

Your committee met following the Senior Nationals to discuss how best to progress for recognition and a number of action points were agreed the enclosed form being one of these. It was also agreed to produce a fact sheet about the AETTU, Stan Clarke to write to National Councillors outlining our recognition request and George Tyler to produce an article for our next newsletter urging members to write to their County or National Councillor or even both. It was also agreed we submit to ETTA a request for a clothing allowance for umpires towards the cost of new or replacement uniform clothing. It was also agreed we obtain quotes for a lapel badge, more about this later.

On a lighter note, having overcome a challenge from Stan Clarke by the narrowest of margins for his AETTU championship title John Mackey may not be sleeping too well knowing that Tom Purcell and Tom Creevy have tabled further challenges. His coach and mentor, our worthy Chairman, is also concerned at the impending loss of this prestigious title knowing he will be no longer be able to bask in the reflected glory as John's coach Uneasy lie both the heads that wear the crown!! Not for much longer say the two Tom's.

Ken Armson MBE

TRAVELLING TO EUROPE

If you will be travelling to Europe in the not too distant future either for table tennis purposes or for any other reason I have received the following text message from Mike Payne which may help you if you are intending to get medical assistance:

For umpires travelling abroad in Europe the health form EI 11 has been replaced by an EHIC - yet another piece of plastic.

*Go to **www.dh.gov.uk/travellers** and fill in the forms online in about 5 minutes for you and your kinfolk. The cards arrives in about a week.*

REMINDER

"Do not forget to fill in the form which is enclosed and return it as soon possible ... 'Thank you.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Congratulations to Bob Montgomery for his interesting letter about the National Umpire qualification in the previous newsletter. Bob raises many issues and I hope my observations will be helpful.

The process of becoming a National Umpire requires a County Umpire to have been qualified for a minimum of two years. During that time he should endeavour to get as much experience as possible at tournaments and ultimately the umpire is nominated to the NURC by the appropriate County Umpires Secretary for the National Umpire qualification process. This process involves attending an interview, sitting a written examination and undergoing practical assessment at a National event.

Bob mentions that the failure rate is very high. He cites the following reasons for this:-

- a) going into the written examination cold
- b) the candidate doesn't know the questions that he/she will be required to answer
- c) multiple choice questions with the choice of five possible answers all of which, depending upon the candidate's interpretation could possible fit the bill
- d) the umpire then goes through a daunting interview
- e) upon receiving the result the candidate gets no feedback about the incorrect answers in the event of failure.

I would like to address Bob's concerns one by one, as follows:-

- a) *An introduction to the examination procedure e.g style of the –written exam, a few 'dummy questions to answer', explanation of the interview and what the examiners are looking for in a successful candidate could be helpful to 'warm up' the candidates.*
I will raise these matters at the next NURC meeting.

In the weeks prior to the examination a candidate ought to prepare themselves fully by having a sound knowledge of the Laws and Regulations of table tennis. The bulk of this knowledge should already be 'imprinted' on the umpires memory because this forms the basis of all their umpiring activity. The days prior to the exam could be used to brush up on the Laws and Regulations and to learn certain aspects that are nor commonly used by the umpire e.g the regulations concerning advertising on players' clothing, court surrounds etc. There is no excuse for going into the written exam 'cold'.

b) *The multiple choice questions are made to make the umpire think. The questions are carefully compiled and all steps are taken to avoid ambiguity. Only one answer 'fits the bill'.*

c) *Yes, some umpires do find the exam daunting. Some questions that are answered incorrectly in the written examination are asked again during the interview. This is to ascertain whether the candidate really does know the correct answer or whether the wrong option in the multiple choices has been selected in error. The candidate has been given a second chance!! The interview is designed to test the candidate's knowledge in situations that could be too complicated too include in the written test. An umpire's confidence in their own answers is also tested.*

d) *Bob makes a good point here. If an umpire has a particular area of weakness then if they are aware of this then they could concentrate on refining their knowledge in that area. I am not sure that divining individual incorrect answers is in the best interest of the umpires.*

This is something that I will raise at the next NURC meeting.

Bob also mentions that 'the experience of the umpire should be taken into consideration. Their willingness to attend tournaments, the way they conduct themselves and the types of tournaments they officiate at'. These matters are taken into account for candidates, indeed if a candidate has officiated at very few tournaments then there is the likelihood that they have had insufficient experience. However, the things Bob mentions here should not be taken as a criteria for awarding the NU qualification.

Bob mentions the question of training. This is something that the NURC are aware needs addressing and has already raised the matter of an NURC training budget. Interestingly, this request for a training budget was made by the NURC prior to any approaches being made by the AETTU, so there should be no accusation of 'stealing the thunder of the AETTU'. One good idea mentioned by Bob is that of international acting as a mentor for County Umpires. Consideration has already been given to this but there are inherent problems because it is rare now for umpires to work in pairs. To act as a mentor when umpires work individually is not really practicable. Training seminars could be helpful but ultimately it is the experience umpiring at the table which is most important.

When I was a County Umpire and doing the tournament circuit to gain experience I received much good advice from International Umpires. Indeed, I believe my progress as an umpire has been significantly helped by such advice. Perhaps the more experienced umpires could offer words of advice and encouragement whenever possible but County Umpires would need to accept such help in the right spirit. If advice is met by an attitude of 'who do they think they are saying that to me' then such offers of advice would soon dry up. Many international umpires might find it awkward to offer words of advice about umpiring technique to County Umpires who have many years experience, albeit that they are aspiring to become National Umpires. To a degree I could accuse myself of this failing, although I am conscious of quite a few umpires who have welcomed words of advice from me.

There is a great deal to do in the area of training and raising umpiring standards. Many of us are aware through observation that some umpires give weak hand signals, make announcements too quietly, do not apply disciplinary procedures or apply them too strictly and inappropriately, and being content to merely act as score callers. If County Umpires are not given constructive words of advice then their progress is made that much harder. Yes, training is a major item on the agenda of the NURC but we all have to play a part in it as well.

In conclusion, I would like to say that it is not such a great leap from the National Umpire to the International Umpire qualification. England's umpires are held in high regard throughout the world because of their high standards. This is due in no small part to the umpire qualification structure that we have and the high standards required to achieve the different levels, particularly that of National Umpire. I would strongly resist

any attempt to improve the pass rate at the expense of diluting the standard. We have a wealth of first class County Umpires but it is the duty of us all to help them reach their full potential.

John Mackey

AETTU Member

ASSOCIATION CHALLENGE

The second match in the series took place during the Disabled Championships at Grantham. The holder John Mackey was put to the test by Stan (the man) Clarke, whose reputation as a whirlwind hitter is renowned in the North West. Once again would the rock like defence overcome the 'master blaster'? The Umpire was John (no nonsense) Hardcastle . When the referee halted the tournament to start the match an ominous silence fell over the hall.

In the first game John fed Stan's ferocious forehand and soon became a game down. After receiving instructions from his coach John encouraged Stan into not moving his feet and persuaded Stan to put most balls either into the net or off the table. One game all. John continued with this tactic in the third game and with only an occasional movement of feet managed to win. Two games to one. Stan however rallied to win the fourth 14-12 with clever use of the net. Two games all. So to a decider. Points were even all the way until John managed to get into a lead - then almost threw it away with 'optimistic' hits, but fortunately Stan cracked at 10 - 9. One more point to John and the match was over. A cracking game, John still the champion. Who's next?

ADAPTION OF RULES (Submitted by Derek Sherratt)

1. Each game is time limited.
2. Rock, paper or scissors to decide starting player,
3. Each serve is worth 1 point; however, if a ball enters the court the player who subsequently lost the point can claim a let on the basis that he has had no luck with regards to nets or edges; his opponent is serving illegally and the light is poor at his end.
4. Scoring player retains service except, when a let is called, in which case a time out is called, one player changes ends and towelling is permitted.
5. If in service the ball touches the net and the umpire is not aware of it, play shall continue until the rally is over when a thorough debate will be held to decide who was the most disadvantaged player.
Opinions may be canvassed from interested spectators or failing that the referee shall be called who will explain that his jurisdiction relates only to points of law.
6. Coaching will not be permitted unless the player is ranked in the top top ten and has a coach who used to be a pretty successful player. Special dispensation may be made if it can be shown that the coach is a near relative.

7. In the event of a tie. The game will be decided on countback.
8. The referee's decision could be final.
9. In the event of a dispute both players may forfeit the game.

These rules are loosely based on the Hoopfest Rules which were drawn up for Basketball a sport very similar to table tennis in that a ball and net are used.



PING PONG

DEFINITION TAKEN FROM NEW
STANDARD ENCYCLOPAEDIA
1932

Table Tennis game introduced about 1901. It is played on a table 9ft. x 5ft., divided by a low net, into two courts. Light wooden racquets and a small celluloid ball are used. Each player serves 5 times in succession, and the ball must hit the table on the player's side and thence into the opponents court. No volleying is permitted.

Game is 21 points up, but it goes beyond that figure if the players are 20 all.

You've just gotta laugh

Warning do not read this page unless you are Broad minded and have a sense of humour

A young couple left the church and arrived at the hotel where they were spending the first night of their honeymoon. They opened the champagne and began undressing. When the bridegroom removed his socks, his new wife asked: "Ewww - whats wrong with your feet? Your toes look all mangled and weird. Why are your feet so gross?" "I had toliio as a child," he answered. "You mean polio?" she asked. "No toliio. The disease only affected my toes." The bride was satisfied with this explanation, and they carried on undressing. When the groom took off his trousers, the bride once again wrinkled up her nose. "What's wrong with your knees?" she asked. "They are lumpy and deformed!" "As a child I had kneasles," he explained. "You mean measles?" she asked. "No kneasles. It was a strange illness that only affected my knees." The new bride had to be satisfied with this answer. As the undressing continued, her husband at last removed his underwear. "Don't tell me", she said. "Let me guess Smallcox?"

THE RULES OF MARRIAGE

A couple were married and, following the wedding, the husband laid down some rules. "I'll be home when I want, if I want, and at what time I want," he insisted. "And, I don't expect any hassle from you. Also, I expect a decent meal on the table every evening, unless I tell you otherwise. I'll go hunting, fishing, boozing, and card playing with my buddies whenever I want. Those are my rules," he said. "Any comments?" His new bride replied: "No, thats fine with me. But just understand that there'll be sex here at seven o'clock every night... whether you are here or not."

Great Golfer

Four men who worked together always golfed as a group at 7.00am on Sunday. Unfortunately, one of them got transferred out of town and they were talking about trying to fill out the foursome. A woman standing near the tee said, "Hey, I like to golf, can I join the group?"

They were hesitant, but said she could come once to try it and see what they thought. They all agreed and she said, "Good, I'll be there at 6.30am or 6.45am."

She showed up dead on 6.30am, and wound up setting a course record with a 7-under par round. The men went nuts and everyone in the clubhouse congratulated her. Meanwhile, she was fun and pleasant the entire round. The men happily invited her back next week and she said, "Sure, I'll be here at 6.30am or 6.45am."

Again she showed up at 6.30am on Sunday morning. Only this time, she played left handed, and matched her 7-under par score of the previous week. By now the men were totally amazed, and asked her to join the group for good. They had a beer after their round, and one of the guys asked her, "How do you decide if you're going to golf right-handed or left-handed?" She said, "That's easy. Before I leave for the golf course, I pull the covers of my husband who sleeps in the nude. If his manhood is pointing to the right, I golf right-handed; if it's pointed to the left, I golf left-handed." One of the men asked, "What if it's pointing straight up?" She answered "That's when I arrive at 6.45am."

The Missing Golf Ball

A man staggers into the emergency room with two black eyes and a golf club wrapped tightly around his throat. Naturally the doctor asked him what happened. "Well it was like this," said the man. "I was having a quiet round of golf with my wife when she sliced her ball into a pasture of cows. We went to look for it and while I was rooting around, I noticed one of the cows had something white at its rear end. I walked over and lifted up the cow's tail and sure enough, there was my wife's golf ball... Stuck right in the middle of the cow's bottom. That's when I made my mistake!!! "What did you do?" asked the doctor. "Well I lifted the tail and yelled to my wife, 'Hey this looks like yours!'."

FROM THE EDITOR

I have been involved with our new Association since its inception, although, I have been playing table tennis since 1943 when I first started at my local youth club as so many of us did in those days. I became interested in the umpiring side of the game when I was elected onto the Warwickshire County Committee in 1968.



I passed my County Umpires exam in 1970 and my National umpires exam in 1973. I then took my International exam in 1975 (The exam was only the third one to have been held since its inception). When I first started umpiring, County matches were played on

set county week-ends and there were no such thing as the two 'County week-ends' which we have now. All matches were played either home or away. In Warwickshire we used a venue from different leagues who made up Warwickshire Association and we usually played a junior match in the afternoon and a senior match at nights and we also had spectators watching, not a thing we see so much of now. We held in 1973 a friendly international match in Coventry - England v Czechoslovakia - and we had 500 spectators watching, again something we do not see these days.

Times have changed and now we see table tennis is trying to be more professional. We are now told how everything has to be done in fine detail when umpiring and in my opinion umpires now have to worry too much about presentation than they do in scoring the match. When I started umpiring the things we are now told to do now came automatically.

Our Association was formed to help our members and try to do all we can to help improve conditions and so we ask all members to keep pledging your support to the Association and I am sure that in the end we will attain better conditions and hopefully recognition by the ETTA. You will find enclosed in the magazine a form which we hope you will fill in and return as soon as possible to the Chairman, Secretary, Officers or any Committee member. We also ask any member who has not yet paid his/her subscription for this year to please do so as soon as possible.

I have written this page to give you some idea of the sort of articles that I need from you, it can be you telling of your experiences or early memories of your table tennis years.

Geoff Taylor
