BDCA committee meeting, 14/5/2020, online edition

Present: Andy Bak, Adrian Arthur, David Barlow, John Holliday, Wil Quick, Lee Crawford, Keith Marsh, Andrew Wainwright, Matthew Webb

Introductions were done for new attendees.

1. AW was thanked for sorting the technology out to host our first online meeting.
2. State of clubs. WQ contacted clubs to find out where they were at in terms of health of players and if lockdown was lifted how many players they felt they could get out. We had no reports of players aversely affected by CV19, although we are aware that this may change at any point. Moving forward, many clubs would probably struggle to field the same number of teams as at present. There is also an issue that the venues of many clubs are currently shut, many with equipment inside.
3. Bradford Chess Centre Proposal. AW and MW outlined their plans for a Bradford Chess Centre. This would be to host chess at all levels across the week. It would charge a membership fee. Clubs would be invited to operate from there. MW is developing an app which would link to Chess Centre and other chess events. We discussed if there was a new generation of players coming through and how to encourage new players of all ages to play more. It was agreed that some venues are uninviting, and that chess within BDCA is played by predominately white, older men, which doesn’t help broaden the appeal. It was envisioned that Bradford Chess Centre would be able to host social chess as well as competitive chess. We thanked AW and MW for their ideas and hope to be working with them as they take this project forward, and encourage others within BDCA to assist to help get this project off the ground.
4. Concluding the season. Given the ongoing public health crisis and government guidance, there is likely to be no real prospect of over the board competitive chess starting in the near future. Therefore, with great regret we cannot see that the 2019/20 season being concluded as a realistic possibility. We therefore have decided that all competitions shall cease. There are no rules or precedents for having to finish a season part way through. The committee have agreed the following.
5. League: AB had previously circulated an email outlining a proposal for the awarding division winners, promotion and relegation. This is appended to these minutes. Divisions 2 and 3 would be calculated on the standings after each team had played each other twice. Only one additional round of matches had been played at this point, and this did not affect the final standings, and a match which was due to be rescheduled had no bearing on the final standings. Division 1 is more complicated, as Ilkley A are 2 points ahead of Undercliffe B with three games left to play. Theoretically Undercliffe B could overtake Ilkley A. It was agreed that the standings at the beginning of lockdown would stand. We acknowledge that this is not completely satisfactory, but that other conclusions to the league season are more problematic.

Division 1: champions Ilkley A

Relegated: South Bradford

Division 2: champions and promoted Shipley B

Relegated: Keighley

Division 3: champions and promoted: Bingley

1. Other competitions: As the Clough, Hepolite and Individuals are based on the Swiss format, and all have two rounds to play, and in recent years haven’t been concluded until the final round, it was agreed that these will all be null and void.
2. Totty, Cocking, John Smith etc trophies. These were mostly based around league results, and it was agreed that these can be awarded, AB to calculate the winners of each.

Under these unprecedented circumstances we hope that all players in BDCA accept and support these difficult decisions. As noted above, there are no rules or precedents for this situation, and we agreed that the committee decision is final. We thank AB for his work to develop a solution to this dilemma.

1. Next season. There are a wide number of variables which make having form proposals for next season difficult. We will keep clubs informed. We may need to change the dates of the season from the usual September to May. It was agreed that once there is some clarity that a season may start, we should hold an EGM 4 weeks before this. However, with social distancing difficult over a chess board, and a large number of players already indicating they would need a lot of convincing to return to OTB, there is a possibility we may not be able to run a full programme of events in 2020/21. WQ will update clubs regularly on this.
2. AGM. The AGM was due to be held at the end of May. As venues are going to be closed this cannot go ahead. The main purpose of the AGM is: to elect officers to run BDCA, to accept or reject the accounts, to agree rule and constitutional changes, to hear reports from the chair, league controller and competition controller. It was agreed that the business of the AGM could take place by email with the following timetable. We agreed that rule changes will not be accepted for this AGM.
3. By 18/5 WQ to send to secretaries and captains an outline of how AGM business will be conducted and a timetable of key dates. This will be cascaded to players. This will include a list of officer positions, asking for nomination by 7/6. Current post holders and vacant positions will be included in this. All current officers have indicated a willingness to continue standing.
4. W/C 8/6 WQ to send to secretaries and captains nominations for officers, statement of accounts, chairs, league controllers and competition controllers reports, along with a statement on the how we see BDCA progressing in the coming season. Clubs and players will have upto 3 weeks to comment via email.
5. W/C 29/6. Feedback will be summarised and shared with secretaries and captains.
6. W/C 6/7 Conclusion of process.
7. Vacant officer positions. The positions of BDCA President and Grading officer remain vacant. Lee Crawford has agreed to stand in as grading officer. We thank Paul Clarke for his tireless work over the last 8 years in this role.
8. Congress. It was agreed that 2020 Bradford Congress will be cancelled. We have paid £50 so far which will write off. DB to update ECF on this decision. If circumstances change we may host a smaller and less formal event that weekend.
9. Online competitions. We thank AB for organising these. We debated if further action could be taken against a member who it was alleged cheated during one of the tournaments. It was decided that as this did not fall formally under the auspices of BDCA we would not be able to take any action.
10. AOB. a) JH’s proposal for changes in the league structure were withdrawn as we do not know what state the league will be in when we next meet.

b) Bradford has 2 teams in the online 4 NCL, more players welcome.