

APPENDIX 3 – DIVISIONAL CHAIRS FORUM 06/09/06

Scottish Universities Sport
Active ~ Competitive ~ Innovative

AU Presidents Forum
acting as the BUSA Scottish Division and BUSA Scottish Playing Conference

Held at the Edinburgh University Sports Union Meeting Room, 48 Pleasance, Edinburgh on Friday 25th August at 11.00am

MINUTES

Present

Ed Nicholas	Edinburgh	Chair	SUS EXEC
James Fairwood	Aberdeen		
Ian Lowe	Abertay		SUS PDC, SUS EXEC
Graham Smith	Glasgow		SUS COMPS
Chris Wilson	Glasgow Caledonian		SUS COMPS
Barry Earl	Napier		
Paul Thomson	Paisley		SUS EXEC
Andy Smith	Robert Gordon		
Will Mackenzie	Stirling		
Angus Stevenson	Strathclyde		SUS COMPS

In Attendance

Quentin Sloper		BUSA Executive Representative
Niall Sturrock		Non Student Representative
Stewart Fowlie		SUS Sports Manager
Ross Campbell	Heriot Watt	SUS COMPS

Apologies

Anna Anderson	Dundee	SUS PAC
Andrew Mallon	Heriot Watt	SUS COMPS
Chris Berry	St Andrews	Secretary
John Baxter	Queen Margaret's	SUS PAC
Scottish Agricultural College		
University of Highlands and Islands		

Chris Berry (St. Andrews) was not in attendance. Graham Smith (Glasgow) was appointed Secretary. Andrew Mallon (Heriot Watt) was also not in attendance. Ross Campbell was asked to attend to speak on issues regarding Heriot Watt. Niall Sturrock was asked if he would like to continue in his role as Non-Student 'adviser' to the group. He duly accepted.

SUS Code of Conduct

The SUS code of conduct is an ongoing project carried over from the previous Presidential year. In 05/06 Vikki (Glasgow), James (Edinburgh), Paul (Paisley) and Pete (Stirling) produced an initial document and it was decided that the 4 incoming Presidents of these institutions would work towards completing it. It is hoped to introduce the document for use in season 06/07 and reasons for its immediate approval were discussed. Avoiding walkovers for the benefit of sport was a major factor.

Having spoken with Mark Brian, EN voiced the concern from BUSA that implementing our SUS rules in BUSA leagues could create problems regarding which rules held sway. It was

therefore suggested that the SUS Code of Conduct be implemented in the form of a gentleman's agreement whereby all Presidents would sign an agreement to follow the code of conduct in all applicable Scottish conference fixtures. It should be noted that BUSA rules would apply in BUSA knockouts. QS explained how a similar system works in the North East Conference but that agreement was not signed.

It was pointed out that the ruling 'a qualified official is deemed neutral' had been omitted from a version of the code of conduct held by some of the members present. It was confirmed that this was an omission and would be written into the final code.

Discussion followed regarding neutrality and Presidents are encouraged to field as many neutral qualified officials as possible, especially encouraged for 1st team fixtures. It was highlighted by many at the table how difficult it can be to find appropriate officials for matches

Issues with point 4.4 were raised and what would happen if a President could not find neutral officials having been asked to by another President. It was felt this was very sport specific but Presidents were still 'at risk' from the ruling. Co-operation and communication with the SDC was encouraged to assist this situation. Removing 14 days from the rule was suggested and SUS could monitor the situation for the forthcoming year and all agreement. It was suggested in sports like hockey where there is difficulty finding appropriate officials that travelling teams could bring officials with them. It was felt that this would create more problems and so it was recognised that the SUS code of conduct was a huge step forward and we should wait a year and revisit it in February after the completion of all Scottish conference fixtures.

All appeals that are made are to be scanned and emailed in to SUS office using the correct forms.

EN to finalise the Code of Conduct, send out with changes and all to send back.

EN also to make an agreement sheet to be sent out signed and by all Presidents before the start of fixtures.

Action: EN

Buddies

Buddies were used in 05/06 as a support network for Presidents. Each President was assigned a buddy in nearby region. It is the responsibility of the buddy to pass over information should their partner miss a meeting. Buddies should also encourage each other to meet deadlines. Buddies for 06/07 are as follows:

Edinburgh – QMU - SAC
Napier – Heriot Watt
Abertay – Dundee
RGU – Aberdeen - UHI
Stirling – St Andrews
Glasgow – Paisley
Strathclyde – Glasgow Caledonian

If both buddies are missing then it is the responsibility of the chair and secretary to distribute the appropriate information. EN to distribute list of buddies to all members

Action: EN

Quorum issues were discussed and it was agreed 9 out of 14 would represent quorum. SF will revamp old SUSF document explaining the purpose/role and notices of the AU Presidents forum. The aim will be to create a terms of reference document for use by the AU Presidents Forum.

BUSA Premier Leagues

The BUSA points review is being implemented for 06/07. You will now receive points for every league position. This has led some institutions to look into increasing their premier league involvement. Squash, Tennis and Lacrosse all currently have Scottish participation in premier leagues and Mark Brian from BUSA has confirmed that any Scottish institution that wins tier 1A will have the OPTION of premier league playoff. This takes affect this year.

Previously in SUSF the decision of a sport to advance to a premier league was taken as a conference decision, debated at AU Forum. However the goalposts have moved at BUSA and NS explained that at the end of the day the decision was the institutions.

EN explained how important it was for his institution to perform well in the BUSA rankings and was something his principal keeps a close eye on.

Concern was raised as it was felt that some teams would end up playing out with their capabilities and the extended travelling and time off university would decrease the student experience.

Furthermore certain leagues would be weakened by the best team going to play in BUSA Premier. However NS explained that the flip side is that an institution would come up into 1A and would be strengthened.

There was agreement that in some sports, certain university teams were dominating and have been for a number of years (e.g. Edinburgh University Netball) and could easily be supported for premier league status. However it was also highlighted that there was difference of opinion on certain sports.

AS suggested new ideas for addressing the points review. It was suggested that institutions pull out teams from premier leagues into 1A to increase the competitiveness of Scottish Leagues. This would increase solidarity and by strengthening the SUS programme could lead to a Scottish Premier or even include northern institutions down as far as Leeds and have 3 premier leagues. This would bring Scottish 1A to the same points as BUSA Premier.

NS suggestion was to wait and find out how Scotland actually fit into the points structure as it is. QS informed that he had carried out research in the area by applying the points review to the BUSA top 20. There was literally no change however this was countered on the grounds of principle and if it is to be called BUSA Premier Leagues then there should be representation from Scotland to.

Discussion followed on 'who cares' about BUSA points however there were institutions sitting on both sides of the fence and it was clear that it was important to some and not others. The Times University guide takes BUSA rankings into account however in the future there will be input from UCS and many other factors will be taken into account, such as facilities.

Scottish Universities have aspirations at different levels and the key is to try and assist everyone in getting what they want.

EN explained how Edinburgh had won 13 Scottish leagues last year and would if the clubs agreed push for Premier league in most. The decision would ultimately be the clubs for example women's hockey have already said no. If Edinburgh were successful in all play offs some felt there would be a mass exodus south to get points. QS stepped in and suggested it as a good idea as there is a very strong view in England that the only reason Edinburgh are so good at sport is because they play in Scottish leagues. Their presence in Premier leagues could help to amend that view.

All Presidents have to complete the questionnaire sent around by EN. Presidents to collate information, speak to their captains, directors and other appropriate bodies. This preparation will be discussed at the next AU Forum, which will begin earlier to allow healthy discussion on the topic. Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Stirling are also asked collate information from their premier league teams on the experiences of competing in Premier Leagues. EN will also produce a document on costs incurred by competing in Premier Leagues.

The issue of Premier Leagues is a difficult one and will involve a heavy amount of consultation before any decisions are made. The process now moves forward and the AU forum has until February 11th to decide which sports it will endorse to move forward to the Premier League Play-offs.

A final footnote is that it should also be noted that at the end of the day institutions can make any decision they want due to BUSA allowing the option to be taken; however it is hoped they will take on board the views of the AU forum and of the SUS competitions committee.

This topic will be revisited at subsequent AU Forum.

ACTION: All Presidents

AU Forum/Relationship with SUS

SF led discussion around the future of the AU forum, what it discusses and its decision-making powers. Following the move from SUSF to SUS the AU forum is the only area not to have a new brief written and so essentially works from the old SUSF model. SF is to produce terms of reference, which will help to cancel out overlapping with other areas such as SUS Competitions committee. NS explained whom BUSA would contact on BUSA specific issues and felt that BUSA would have no right but to go to the AU forum for decisions. However certain Presidents are elected to committees and those elected should represent the view of the forum and vice versa. Copies of all SUS minutes should be distributed to all AU Presidents.

There was a brief discussion of BUSA Exec and how Scotland has no representative has student director. QS explained how BUSA want the four best people for the job regardless of location. This is an important time for SUS and so we should maybe think ahead to next year with regards student director election.

Action: SF

SUS/ BUSA Relationship

SF informed how he is regularly in touch with BUSA. BUSA have a financial buy in which is in respect supporting the various activities of SUS. SF and Jim Aitken will be meeting with Ian Randall soon to discuss the extent of this arrangement further. BUSA Exec minutes need to be requested. An exec summary is on the mail out but it was felt that student director to distribute more in-depth report. The divisional chairs and directors will be meeting soon to strengthen links.

Conference Fixtures

There is change to football fixtures and all affected institutions have been given sheet to make amendments. Squash is now a weekend programme so ignore all weekday fixtures. Thanks to Ross Campbell (Heriot Watt) and James Williamson (Edinburgh) for their huge input into the compilation of SUS fixtures.

BUSA Exec Board

BUSA Exec Report

Further to the discussion on the state of BUSA Premier Leagues and the BUSA Points Review Scottish Golf 1A will receive the same points as the BUSA premier league.

Discipline

Last year there were a lot of discipline issues and main issues are arising already. The discipline process has been condensed in the hope that few people will be making regular consistent decisions. Before there were too many people involved and case law was not used. The discipline group will try and work as much as possible over the phone.

Glass Ceilings

The BUSA cricket final was contested between Loughborough and Loughborough cricket academy. The glass ceiling has been put back on and next year the defending champions will not be allowed to play.

Website

The new website is due any day and the Vodafone deal is soon to be signed.

AGM

After last years AGM and election farce Sam Hibbs (Student Director) and Nigel Mayglothling (Director of Administration) are looking into new policies. New sports programme manager has been appointed and will be beginning soon.

BUGS

BUGS remains a contentious issue as no bid has been placed to host it. England shows no interest in the event. There is the potential to host individual events e.g. Home Nations Hockey. It is thought that the SMG in any given sport may provide support should anyone show an interest in hosting an event of this kind.

BUSA and Intra Mural Sport

There is a weekend festival taking place in Durham to pioneer this new format, which is offering another opportunity for sport. We will be updated on the progress of the event.

Divisional Publicity

BUSA are trying to increase publicity and all divisions are encouraged to make collages etc. QS is seeking someone with the skills to make short movies for publicity measures.

SUS Committees

SUS Executive

The new website supplier has been chosen and progress going good. The first Executive Committee meeting is in the afternoon after AU forum so there will be a more detailed report next time.

SUS Competitions

SUS Competitions committee have finalised their working remit for the coming year. In 2006/2007 they will be working on the following points.

Formalising and modernise Scottish programmes

Creating a support network for Sport Development Coordinators (SDCs).

Build bridges with National Governing Bodies (NGBs)

Improve the student experience.

There is to be a conference for NGBs hopefully before Christmas. This is being worked towards at the moment.

SUS Physical Activity

There is an Active Age Festival taking place at Heriot Watt on 6th September. Volunteers needed to help with teas, walks etc. Contact Anna Anderson asap with offers of help.

Action: All Presidents

SUS Professional Development

This group have yet to meet. They will be looking into drafting volunteer strategies and sharing best practice and improving networks

Venue and Date of next meeting

Meeting are scheduled to happen on the morning of SUS Comps meetings EN will liaise with Raleigh Gowrie, QS and SF and will distribute the times through email.

Action: EN

AOCB

WMac told us of a friend who has begun a yearbook newsletter journalism project and encouraged s to show an interest and felt it could benefit our institutions a lot. There is a launch party for this at Stirling Union on September 16th. The theme is to be a foam party but please do not tell anyone.

Action	Responsible
Code of conduct – finalise document and draft agreement paperwork	EN
Agreement sheet to be sent out signed and by all Presidents before the start of fixtures.	EN
Distribute list of buddies to all members	EN
Create a terms of reference document for use by the AU Presidents Forum.	SF
Collate information, speak to their captains, directors and other appropriate bodies regarding BUSA Premier Leagues	All Presidents
Produce a document on costs incurred by competing in Premier Leagues	EN
Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Stirling are also asked collate information from there premier league teams on the experiences of competing	JF, EN WMac
Date and Venue of Next meeting – email conversation	EN