**EMSL AGM Sunday 26th February 2017**

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| **APOLOGIES**  Arrows  Loughborough University | **ATTENDEES**  Pyros  Pyros Juniors  Tigers  Redbacks  Brewers  Sheriffs  Leicester Royals  Rebels  Misfits  Pulse  Beavers | **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**  Phil Kielthy  Harvey Pryor  Charlie Hallam  Ian Tomlin  Paul Cooper  Laura Greenwood  David Morley |

**REVIEW OF THE SEASON**

We have an ongoing difficulty with fixtures which has been a negative hassle for the teams over the season. As a league we do have a large number of games when compared with other leagues (18 games per team compared with 10-12 in other leagues). With the number of tournaments that our teams commit to attend there is an increasing need to schedule games on a weekday evening.  
There have been two new additions to the league this year, with Loughborough entering a team into the 1st half of the season and Pulse joining us as part of the Misfits Softball Club for the 2nd half. The Pulse will be joining us for the full season this coming year.  
Sheriffs were the winners of the 1st half of the season this in 2016 and represented the EMSL at the platinum nationals. They went on to win the tournament and as a result, they will be invited back this year to defend their title.  
The 2nd half of the season was very competitive this year and the race for 1st place was close between Sheriffs, Pyros and Pyros Juniors. The final result was 1st: Pyros, 2nd: Pyros Juniors and 3rd: Sheriffs. The 2nd division playoff was between the Tigers and the Misfits with the Tigers going on to win and take their place at the nationals.

**FINANCES**

LEAGUE

The league is running at cost to avoid losses; however, this year there has been a small deficit of approximately £300.   
There were a number of indoor balls leftover (not including Labor Day or Firstball). We were also alerted to the impending increase in price for outdoor balls, therefore we purchased a number of balls to secure the lower price for a number of years.  
The umpires course was more expensive than usual as we covered the cost of an assessor to be present at Firstball to qualify new umpires at BASU level.  
The end of season party took a large loss, and as a result we are looking to improve on this year. The party is already booked for Saturday 14th October at The Canal House in Nottingham City Centre. A survey was sent out to ask for feedback after the poor attendance, however there weren’t many responses. The committee invited the room to give feedback:

* A more easily accessible venue would make the event more attractive. Party goers like to go into town afterwards, and therefore a venue in town would be better.
* The disco is unnecessary, and with the right venue, an iPod and a playlist would be sufficient.
* The food is also unnecessary and at a high cost, as some teams go out for a meal before anyway.

Kelsey Mumford (Sheriffs) made the committee aware that we may be able to get a discount for trophies from Glasscraft Trophy Shop in Warsop which is run by a friend of the team. Contact Kelsey or Donna Bruce for more information.

FIRSTBALL

There will be opportunity for 16 teams at Firstball this year. EMSL teams will be charged £75 and teams outside of the EMSL will be charged £85. The ground cost has increased for 2017.

INDOOR 15/16

There were some outstanding fees which were not invoiced during the second half of the indoor season of 2015/16. The teams with outstanding fees have been contacted and some of the fees recovered. One of the teams with outstanding fees has since disbanded (Stealers), therefore the cost will be absorbed by the league, unless the team re-join the league in the future, in which case the league will look to recuperate the outstanding fee.

LABOR DAY

There was a refund made for the umpires due to a situation that occurred over the weekend. 30 entry fees were collected overall, however only 28 teams entered, as those who cancelled were not refunded. There are a number of assets that were purchased which are now depreciating costs over a 5-year period (i.e. fences, banners etc.). The miscellaneous costs relate to first aid, radios etc. Overall there was a healthy profit recorded of £1500 approximately.  
Next year there is likely to be a price increase. There will also be 8 pitches therefore 32 spaces. As usual any EMSL team that pays a £50 deposit will be guaranteed a place and will also receive a £20 discount on league fees next season.

GROUNDS

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ground** | **Max pitches** | **Marking Cost** | **Cost per game** | **Notes** |
| Chilwell | 2 | 200 | 15 | Cost TBC |
| West Park | 3 | N/A | 23.50 | Cost TBC |
| Grove Farm | 1 | N/A | 14 | Arrows home ground |
| Bestwood | 1 | N/A | 14 | Pyros home ground |

Cost increase for Chilwell which will go up in April. The cost for Grove Farm is still uncertain (check with Arrows).   
The forum was opened was to allow for feedback on the grounds we use for league games:

* At Chilwell, the grass is often too long and the line markings are not good. 2nd pitch is not quite long enough with some people hitting over the fences into private property.
* West Park has been good despite the one incident where there was an issue with booking. Marking and pitch quality is good. Highest price per game of £23.50.

It is worth noting that comparatively to other leagues, we have low game costs. Should we look to increase the cost of the games to put some money toward a fund for a proper ground/diamond?  
The misfits advised that at West Park, the groundsman take feedback very well. They cut and mark the field weekly and the team are very keen to develop the ground.   
There is availability for 2 or 3 pitches there at a time and they are looking to put up a backstop and overthrow net for the protection of spectators due to it being a public area.

SUMMARY

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Paid in** | **Paid out** | **Assets** | **Net** |
| League | £5,643 | £6,609 | £675 | -£291 |
| First Ball | £1,200 | £957 |  | £243 |
| Indoor | £1,770 | £1,440 |  | £330 |
| Labor Day | £6,665 | £5,715 |  | £950 |
| Other\* | £ - | £355 |  | -£355 |
| **Total** | **£15,278** | **£15,076** | **£675** | £877 |

\*includes 4 flags which were purchased for the Notts TV event. These are available to borrow on request.

League fees for the coming season:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Categories** | **Amount** |
| Balls | £45/Dozen |
| League Fee | £25 by date, £50 after |
| Insurance | £21 |
| **Total Approx + BSF Fees** | **£136 + BSF Fees** |
| Ground Cost | £10/game |
| Umpire Expenses | £5/game |

There will be no increase in costs despite the ground price increase. Ball costs have remained the same, the figure in the table is based on the whole season. The price of insurance has also remained the same.  
League fees due 1st April (£25 before, £50 afterward).

BSF fees for the coming season:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Categories** | **BSF Fees** | **Team** |
| 1st | 110 | N/A |
| 2nd | 125 | Pulse |
| 3rd | 140 | Rebels |
| Full | 185 | Everyone Else |
| Youth/Uni | 70 | Arrows, Pyros JNRs |

**BSF UPDATE**

The BSF AGM took place on Saturday 25th Feb. Kelsey Mumford, Phil Kielthy, Ian Tomlin and Harvey Pryor were in attendance.  
There has been no fee increase this year despite previously thinking there would be.   
We have 3 teams going to the nationals (Pyros, Tigers and Sheriffs who are returning champions). There may be an opportunity to send another team if there are spaces available (historically this has been the case) and we will wait and ask nearer the time.  
As they have now disallowed independent (non-league registered) teams from entering, it is not believed that this will be an issue.  
Jenny Fromer has been elected as the new president.  
The vote to bring the BBF and BSF together was not brought in as it was not wanted by the BBF. The BSF are to take another look at the constitutions and go back to the drawing board. Any further agreements will be brought to vote at an EGM or the next AGM.

GRANTS

There is £7000 of the budget allocated for development grants. Teams and individuals can request up to £250 for safety equipment (helmets and masks etc.). Teams from the EMSL are encouraged to go forward for grants when starting up and developing new players/teams.

The minutes from the BSF AGM are available on the BSF website.

BSUK

John Boyd is CFO of the BSUK. There are 24,000 people playing softball in the UK and this is a growing number (this number includes charity leagues and occasional players).  
A survey was put out which received 650 responses, however these were mainly from full time players rather than people who have just played on one occasion or for a short time.

Results:

* 43% of respondents were female
* 71% were between 18-40 years’ old
* 24% were aged 41+ (will increase as time goes on as players continue to play into this age bracket, this is already much larger than other sports)
* 14% of respondents were from the LGBT community

There has been a 15-20% reduction in funding which has resulted in a reduction in the number of employees.

They have proposed to put on a Captains Course at a local league level, which the BSF may look to fund as cost can be a barrier to some teams being able to attend. They have also proposed putting on a Slow Pitch Academy. There are currently two national academies (Baseball and Fast pitch) however there is not one for Slow pitch at present. The academies are typically aimed at 13-25 year olds to identify talent for the national teams.  
There have been some ideas shared about putting on slow pitch clinics for batting and fielding and also for specific positions. It was also pitched that there could be sessions for specific age groups or women only sessions. Suggested cost would be £15 per player.

U18 consent forms can be carried forward for the whole season, and a new form is not required for each tournament. BSF will be updating the form for clarity.

**LEAGUE UPDATES**

The league will be making grants available and an application form is to be created. All applications will be discussed during a committee meeting and considered fairly.  
Grants given in this past year included paying for Harvey to attend the coaching summit and providing the Misfits with some indoor balls to help develop their new players for this coming season.  
Suggested reasons include coaching, development and equipment, however details will be released over the next few months.

**LABOR DAY**

Cost increase to £240 to bring it more in line with that of other tournaments, however comparatively this is still cheap. There will be a £20 discount on next years’ league fees for any EMSL teams that enter.  
There will be less accommodation available this year.   
Help is required to set up on the Friday, offers from the Royals and the Misfits.

**INCIDENT REPORTING**

We are not very good at reporting incidents in general. We should be doing it for all incidents that happen during league games. This is to ensure that we have the necessary evidence to support any issues we might have. An example of an issue from the Solent league is an individual who was hit in the face by a ball. 6 months later they received a bill from the county court as they were sued for negligence. Any claim has to be made within 3 years but it can be done.  
There is a form available on the website and the league will send it on to all teams.  
  
**UMPIRE IN CHIEF REPORT**

The league now has 37 qualified umpires, however there are still teams without qualified umpires who have been contacted.  
All league umpires are encouraged to take up BASU qualification however only 8/37 currently have. This does give the umpire an additional 2 years’ qualification, meaning they will not have to re-sit the course for 4 years.  
We also have two umpires that have taken the advanced course. This is a reasonably new course that has an entry exam. It is 1-day attendance and there are courses planned for the 22nd and 29th of April this year.  
The standard course that the league provide is a level 2 course which is spread over 2 days. Within our league, our umpires are only responsible for a small number of games and are better qualified than those who umpire in other leagues.  
There have been a number of complaints around the abuse that our umpires receive, which seems mostly to be from other qualified umpires. At a recreational level, with all umpiring being provided on a voluntary basis, there is no need for such behaviour. Umpires are reminded that they are well within their rights to eject a player/spectator from the game if they are verbally abusive. One of the comments from the room was that some individuals (umpires) may not feel brave enough to enforce this, however all umpires are reminded that they have the complete backing from the league should they decide to do so.  
A suggestion was made to get together as a group of umpires to discuss the current issues each other are facing, and also to address any inconsistencies with the way rules are applied.  
Captains are reminded that if they wish to correct the umpire on the way a rule is enforced, they must have a copy of the rule book in order to do so. Without this, they are not in a position to question the application or interpretation of a rule.  
We do not currently have a method of feedback for an umpire during a game. It was the concern of the room that this could be disheartening if an umpire were to receive consistently bad feedback. Suggestions around scoring the umpires on a scale of 1-10 for each game, and the option to provide constructive comments. This would highlight opportunities for the UIC to provide additional support to an umpire receiving numerous comments around the same thing. There would be guidelines required on the way this feedback should be given.

The umpires course this year is 25th & 26th March and there are 12-14 places available. It is supported by a BASU instructor. The candidates so far are:

* Charlotte Bentley (Royals)
* Charlie Hallam (Redbacks)
* Phil Kielthy (Brewers)
* Josh Peat (Pyros)
* Misfits (3-5 places)
* Sheriffs (3 places)
* Rebels (2 places)

Loughborough and Beavers will not have the correct number of umpires going into this season.

Assessment opportunities for BASU qualification will be available at Labor Day (Luke/Arrows, Sarah/Brewers and Neil/Tigers have expressed interest in doing so).  
There may also be the opportunity for the refresher course this year for those individuals who need to requalify but have taken the 2-day course twice or more. Ian Tomlin would be providing this course which will allow you to continue to umpire at league level, but not BASU. This will be discussed further at committee level.

**WEBSITE**

The website currently contains articles of many different types including the AGM details, minutes from committee meetings and the AGM. We also currently provide a monthly BSF update which one of the committee members will compile and send to the BSF. The committee would like to ask the league teams to send 2/3 lines about games they have had over the month in order to build this report.  
We have had 14 people contact the league or individual teams through the website about starting to play softball. There are some unfinished profiles on the website for a number of teams (Beavers, Brewers, Loughborough, Royals and Sheriffs), which if finished, might improve the contact rate.   
We have one public page on Facebook for the EMSL and also a closed group. Promotion of this page could be good for gaining further new interest.

**MARKETING**

David Morley has created some posters and flyers on behalf of the committee. There is the possibility of printing these if teams/individuals would like to use them. They are of a professional quality and give a good amount of information to encourage new players. They will also be available on Facebook and other social media to share. When discussing in the room, electronic sharing seemed a much more popular option for most.  
The Rebels shared the concern about where we would refer new players to. The suggestion of creating a development team made up of purely new players in order to introduce people to the game. The Bristol league currently run taster sessions which helps generate new interest. Leeds also create new teams with groups of new players, however this would require commitment from individuals who have the time to run it. The league could also run 4-week builder sessions to avoid commitment being an issue.  
Another suggestion is to run league training sessions involving a number of teams to increase the number of people and open up the option to have scrummage games. This would also allow teams with low training turn outs to train as well if they wanted to. Kelsey Mumford to build a proposal for mixed training sessions a couple of times a season and submit this to the committee.

**PROPOSALS**

In the event of a tie, the deciding vote will go to the acting chairperson which at present is Phil Kielthy.

1. **League structure**:

* Proposal 1 – to change to 3 divisions in the 1st & 2nd half of the season. (**7 votes**)
* Proposal 2 – to change to 2 divisions in the 1st & 2nd half of the season. (**0 votes**)
* Proposal 3 – to remain as we are (1 division in the 1st half and 2 in the 2nd half). (**4 votes**).

**Proposal 1 passed by majority vote (no abstentions).**

1. **Minimum number of players**:

* Proposal – for there to be no minimum number of players required to play a game. The decision to play or forfeit the match lies with the individual team captain who is short of players. Forfeit rule applies and match can be played as a friendly.
* **Votes for: 8**
* **Votes against: 3**
* **Abstentions: 0**
* **Proposal passed by majority vote.**

1. **Slaughter rule:**

* Proposal - remove the slaughter rule and allow teams to score an uncapped number of runs in a single inning.
* **Votes for: 8**
* **Votes against: 3**
* **Abstentions: 0**
* **Proposal passed by majority vote.**

1. **Slaughter rule:**

* Proposal – to increase the number of runs before the slaughter rule is imposed to a 10 run lead.
* **This is not applicable due to previous voting decision.**

1. **Transfer rule:**

* Proposal – players will be ineligible for the next league game to be played by the team they are transferring to. Players are only eligible for one transfer without restriction per season. All transfers must be notified to the EMSL committee, the date and time of said notification will be recorded as the time and date the transfer took place. Further transfers will be at the discretion of the committee. No player transfers allowed 3 weeks prior to the end of each half of the season. Exemptions to this rule include players whose team does not take part in a section of the season.

If a team violates any part of this rule, they will forfeit any points gained after the transfer and may face further sanction as determined by the league committee.

* **Votes for: 11**
* **Votes against: 0**
* **Abstentions: 0**
* **Proposal passed by unanimous vote.**

1. **Availability:**

* Proposal – teams will only be allowed to specify 3 X Thursdays when they are unavailable to play, per half season. Teams may stipulate more days; however, the league cannot guarantee that these requirements will be met.
* **Votes for: 6**
* **Votes against: 5**
* **Abstentions: 0**
* **Proposal passed by majority vote.**

1. **Tuesday games:**

* Proposal – games can be scheduled on a Tuesday to create more flexibility for scheduling. This will only apply for teams who have indicated they will be available for Tuesday games. By voting for this proposal, you are not then forced to be available for Tuesday games. It will be assumed a team cannot play on a Tuesday unless they advise they can.
* **Votes for: 11**
* **Votes against: 0**
* **Abstentions: 0**
* **Proposal passed by unanimous vote.**

1. **Member proposal: Uniform rules:**

* Proposal – to relax the uniform rules to allow teams to wear similar coloured tops without numbers and non-matching bottoms.
* **Votes for: 2**
* **Votes against: 9**
* **Abstentions: 0**
* **Proposal rejected by majority vote.**

1. **Member proposal: Helmets:**

* Proposal – to relax the helmet rule so that helmets are no longer mandatory, only recommended for all players in the EMSL.
* **Votes for: 1**
* **Votes against: 8**
* **Abstentions: 2**
* **Proposal rejected by majority vote.**

1. **Member proposal: ISF rules:**

* Proposal – to only follow the ISF rules and exclude all local amendments. This would disregard the helmet rule, male/female ball rule, ringer rule, minimum player rule and captain’s agreement rule. It would also see the uniform rules tightened to include matching caps (visors for women).
* **Votes for: 0**
* **Votes against: 11**
* **Abstentions: 0**
* **Proposal rejected by unanimous vote.**

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The committee would like to thank Paul Cooper for his time as Development Officer and acknowledge the work he has done to support and develop the league over his years as part of the committee. He has now chosen to step down due to personal circumstances.

The committee for the 2017/18 season is:

* Chairperson – Phil Kielthy
* Treasurer – Phil Kielthy (Brewers)
* Umpire in Chief – Ian Tomlin (Pyros)
* Fixtures Secretary – Harvey Pryor (Tigers)
* Media Officer – David Morley (Redbacks)
* Development Officer – Shannon Henry (Rebels)
* Welfare Officer – Matt Coleman (Pulse)
* Secretary – Laura Greenwood (Pyros Juniors)
* General Member – Hayley Slatford (Royals)
* General Member – Kelsey Mumford (Sheriffs)
* General Member – Charlie Hallam (Redbacks)

**AOB**

There is a possibility for 3 or 4 diamonds at West Park if there is the appetite for it. Having this amount of games at the same time would make it considerably cheaper. We only used one last year, therefore increasing to two this year could be a feasible option for scheduling purposes. West Park could also be an option for the Single Sex tournaments.

Another point from the BSF meeting is that if you are playing for B or C grade, the GB team can offer coaching for your club at no charge. This is for yours and their development and would be someone from the local area.

Close.