

2010 AGM Matter Arising

Sport England Update

There follows a synopsis of the actions taken over the last year or so to reach a solution in the problem of Sport England recognition.

Following the rejection of the License Agreement arrangement by EABA in November 2008, we attempted to establish a co-operation group involving the existing billiards community. This was intended to look at the development of billiards in areas which were not currently being addressed by the EABA or EBOS. However, after attending an initial meeting, both of these groups declined to have any further part in this initiative, although some of the invited individuals continue to support our efforts.

Thereafter, EASB progressed unilaterally, establishing billiards as part of the Home Internationals and also incorporating billiards in the annual international fixture with Scotland. Plans were also made to include billiards instruction an integral part of the coaching programme which we intend to launch later this year.

In January 2009, we invited IBSF to mediate in the latest impasse with the EABA, taking up their offer of assistance which had been made in November at their AGM. Despite sending a reminder in March 2009, no response to this appeal was ever received.

In April 2009, having given up any hope receiving any support from the IBSF, we approached the newly appointed Chair of Sport England, Richard Lewis, with an invitation for him to mediate in the matter. This initiative did receive a reply, and on 8th May 2009 Sport England suggested that if we could find a way for IBSF to officially recognise EABA then they would be prepared to approve both of our organisations as independent Governing Bodies for Billiards and Snooker respectively.

Having confirmed the acceptability of this proposal with the EABA we approached firstly the European Association and then IBSF for their input and support. Our suggestion was that we could share our existing membership without breaching existing constitutional requirements for "one member per country." No response to this invitation was ever received from either party.

Without being able to determine whether the IBSF Board supported or opposed the idea, we decided to put the question to the IBSF Membership at the AGM in November 2009. Although accepting the proposal as an agenda item, they refuse to allow a vote to be taken. The official reason for this is still unclear as the IBSF President, who chaired the meeting, gave a variety of possible options by way of explanation. We assume that this lack of candour was in anticipation of having to mount a legal defence of his action.

Since trying to engage them in this matter, we have found the attitude of the IBSF Board most unhelpful. They have not only refused to discuss this initiative, other than in person, when the President visits England, but also continued with their "unofficial" recognition of both EABA and EBOS for indirect entry into their Billiards Championship without reference to ourselves. In fact, even whilst our proposal for official recognition of the EABA was being blocked, IBSF officials were engaged in direct negotiations with them to stage the 2010 IBSF Billiards Championship in England.

It is clear that the IBSF Board will neither discuss this matter with us, nor allow their Members to vote upon it, unless they are compelled by an order of the Court to do so. We are currently at the stage where we must decide whether it is worthwhile to progress with such action, or look for an alternative solution. In this respect, other options are currently being evaluated.

Peter Ainsworth