



President's Report 2017

Welcome

I would like to welcome you all to the English Pétanque Association 2017 Annual General Meeting and my second as President and the end of my first term.

Assembly

We held the EPA Assembly in October which was well attended where we covered a number of subjects, particularly the internal structure, initial thoughts on charitable status and communications. We will be holding a Congress again this year and will be looking to bring to you our thoughts and plans for the next steps forward in these complex areas.

We have not brought any proposals to the membership this year as we are in a period of consolidation and implementation of the changes we have brought about in the last 2 years and want to focus on the delivery of those changes.

Finances

Our finances continue a firm footing and Cary our Treasurer will take you through those in detail later.

This strength continues to allow us to progress our plans to take our sport forward over the next 5 years.

The operational framework in which we operate with respect to taxation, legal responsibility of officials etc. is continually changing and we need to ensure that we are operating within those parameters and making best use of the financial structures available to us. Over the coming year, we will be reviewing the organisational structure and investigate the options available to the organisation with respect to charitable / incorporated status. This is not a step we are taking lightly and we will be seeking the appropriate professional advice and updates to members will follow as we move forward.

Insurance

We remain with our same broker who are able to explore the insurance market and deliver appropriate solutions. As a result of this review, this year we have moved to a different insurer with increased cover.



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We continue to manage our operational overheads, whilst having more management committee meetings either in person or using conference calls. For the last couple of years, we have had access to some very inexpensive meeting rooms. Unfortunately those arrangements are coming to an end, if anyone can help with cost effective access to meeting rooms can you please let our secretary, David Baxter, know.

Club Small Grants

We have had very limited applications to the fund over the last couple of year, we will be reviewing the programme in 2017 to ensure that the fund can add value and develop our sport.

Membership

I must thank Ray Keemer-Richards for his efforts as our National Membership Secretary, it is a highly visible role and generally a thankless task. As at today we have 2278 active and financial members, with 151 Clubs. Of those we have 9 new clubs. We are ahead of the number of members and clubs as at this time last year, up 145 from 2133

I welcome Jim Marstin to the Management Committee and he will be taking on responsibility for looking after the club registration side.

New Rule Books

New Rule Books have been sent to all Regions for onward distribution. Both Ray & Jim are only humans and doing this role voluntarily, so please be patient if things are not quite as you might like.

Membership Database

We are aware there have been some issues with the membership database and have been searching for alternatives. Work is progressing on this and we hope to have a new system soon.

Coaching Commission

Since its introduction and commencement two years ago in 2015, candidates from thirteen (13) of the associations regions, applied themselves to the course, its teachings and examinations.

As a result, we now have so far, 65 newly qualified and listed DBS club coaches, with a remit of raising our playing standards at club level. The new method of DBS clearance procedure has made a big difference in establishing a smooth process for the successful applicants.

Of special note, by taking the 65 new club coaches and adding to this our existing and/or renewed DBS qualified club coaches (38) we have a total of 103 qualified DBS cleared coaches within the current coaching structure. Additionally, there are proposed /initial plans in place to extend the interest in the club coach course to the remaining three regions.

One of the interesting factors has been the taking of the course by a broad spectrum in the member`s ages, genders and playing abilities.



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A very recent highlight has been to see two of our current top young players, Sarah Huntley and Sean Prendergast, taking the step of joining the ranks of coaches and they are eager to pass on their qualities to new and developing players.

Into 2017, the Club Coach Advanced is now available and is designed for those club coaches who are prepared to apply their coaching beyond their own clubs into their region or beyond. The County Coach is expected to come to fruition in the latter part of the year and will become available to Advance level coaches.

Thank you to Colin Roper for the excellent work in leading the Coaching Commission and driving this tremendous growth in grass root coaches. Thank you also to all the coaches that have taken time to complete the course and their time in providing coaching to our members.

Umpires Commission

The Commission are putting together plans to hold more courses this year, with a view to bringing the qualification and training of EPA Umpires more in line with how umpiring is developing internationally and to make it mandatory for EPA umpires to attend refreshers in 2017.

Rules Awareness.

The Commission will be contacting Regions to see what players require on these courses and to publish courses on EPA website and will be working closely with the Coaching Commission to encourage their attendance.

Umpire Exam.

The Commission will run a number of umpire courses aimed primarily at existing EPA umpires although new candidates would be welcome to attend, The aim is to have at least 3 courses in 2017 at various locations to try and make it easier for candidates to attend and to reduce travelling costs.

Thank you to Bob Parker for leading (and agreeing to continue) the Umpires Commission. It may be one of the less glamorous elements of the sport but I would strongly encourage those that are interested to get involved and support the Umpires Commission. Without our Umpires, it makes the running of our National Events very difficult. If you wish to be involved please contact Bob.

Playing Commission

I am hard pushed to recall a year where we have had such great activity and success.

International sides

We have supported a number of sides representing the Association at International Competitions, either financially or logistically.

National Youth Squad

Many thanks go to Matt, Brian and Toni (along with all of the parents and other volunteers) for their sterling work in running this area. They have a great website, if you have not seen it I encourage you to take a look, detailing all of their activities. They ran an extensive plan of activities in 2016 leading to the Junior European Championships in Monaco. Moving forward into 2017 they have an exciting plan of activity for this year including having international coaches visiting for training days.

Espoirs Squad



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Simon Bird & Paul Lancaster have picked up running this area and they both bring a wealth of experience from playing for many years at the top level of the sport and are developing a similar programme for this age group.

Elite Squads

In late 2015 / early 2016 we made the decision to move away from self-selected teams for our Women's Representative Squads. In 2016, we ran a series of Ranking Competitions to get a pool of 16 Women who we would work with in 2017 with a view to selecting the team to represent the EPA and the World Championships. This is progressing well with training and experiential activities planned for the year.

Moving into 2017 we will continue this programme for the Women's elite squad and will also introduce a similar programme for the Men's elite players.

Home Nations

This year 8 sides travelled to Edinburgh in August. The competition expanded to include Jersey adding new friends into the mix. Once again England were the winners. In 2017, we are the hosts and will be heading to Mill Rythe on Hayling Island in August. 2017 will be slightly more challenging for us as our elite men will be playing in a competition in France that weekend as part of their development programme.

Titles Weekend

We returned to the ISCA Pétanque club in Devon and had another super weekend of pétanque. A big thank you to John Thatcher and his great team and we are looking forward to returning this year.

We are at the end of our 3 years at ISCA and later in the year we will be seeking bids for holding the competition going forward. A detailed specification will be released in due course, if you have a suitable venue then we look forward to receiving your bid.

Richard Powell

Richard has taken on a great role for us as the International Playing Administrator, helping all of our International Representative sides with all of the logistics related to representative duties.

Inter-Regional Championships

Congratulations to Southern for "doing the double" and to all the other winners.

We introduced several changes for last year:

- Champion of Champion Shooting
- Junior Shooting Competition

Both of these were very well supported and very competitive, we will be looking to repeat this in 2017.

Hopefully you also noticed our new double sided scoreboards to help spectators see the scores of matches, these were based on a suggestion from a number of members at the last championships.

Weather

Hopefully the weather will not be quite so mean in 2017, I would rather not be trying to sweep away the flood waters again, but I will pack some wellies this year, maybe even some waders.



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The Championships were very enjoyable from my point of view, a lot of excellent boules played in a great friendly yet competitive spirit. I hope all of those who attended enjoyed last year and like me are looking forward to this year's competition.

The weekend does not happen without a great deal of effort from a team of people, I did thank them at the event, but I wish to record my thanks formally to the team both front and back of house that ran the weekend, meaning I could play again.

Thank you to:

- Adrian & Faith Thomas who with Annette Eggleton ran the control desk;
- Steve Snudden for his work before the event on the scoring system (and technical support over the weekend);
- Bob Parker, Gareth Sullivan & Pete Hardy the Umpiring Team;
- The volunteers during set up and take down of the terrains, we had a great team on Friday and Monday morning, it makes it so much easier and quicker with more hands. If you can help then please let us know if you can be on-site early on Friday to assist in preparing the pitches and be available for an hour or so after breakfast on Monday to help take down.
- Our partner, Isle of Wight Tours, who undertake all the booking logistics and background management over the weekend. This allows us to concentrate on the playing side.

We will be asking regions soon for their commitments on squads for this year's Tournament and will then work on the logistics.

Roll of Honour 2016

International Representation

Junior European Championships – Monaco – Nations Cup Bronze
Alex Spillett, Daniel Raine, Chris Wilmot, Ollie Zimmerman
Manager Matt Blyton

Women's European Championships – Slovakia
Emma Longstaff, Sarah Huntley, Tracy Turner, Sabrina Seville
Manager Roland Jones

Women's European Shooting Championship – Bronze Medal
Sarah Huntley

Men's World Championships – Madagascar
Scott Ashby, Kevin Spillett, Rowland Jones, Jack Blows
Manager Simon Bird

Men's European Espoirs Triples - Torrelavega, Spain
Sam Blakey, Ross Jones, Jack Blows, Monty Quaia
Manager Simon Bird

Women's European Espoirs Triples - Torrelavega, Spain – Bronze Medal
Samantha Thatcher, Kaylee Thatcher, Emma Longstaff, Christina Norris
Manager Paul Lancaster



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Veteren's European Triples - Monaco – Nations Cup Gold Medal
Angie Jamieson, Lee Jamieson, Robert Silvy, Jean-Louis Guiot
Manager Robert Gaywood

Inter-Regional Championships

Inter-Regional Division 1 Champions Southern
Inter-Regional Division 2 Champions Eastern

Inter-Regional Challenge Trophy

Inter-Regional Challenge Trophy Division 1 Champions Southern
Inter-Regional Challenge Trophy Division 2 Champions London

Inter-Regional Junior Champions Eastern

National Champions

National Singles Champion - Men	Sean Prendergast
National Singles Champion - Women	Sarah Huntley
National Doubles Champions - Men	Fadi Brahmi, Rachid Hannache
National Doubles Champions - Women	Christine Norris, Samantha Thatcher
National Doubles Champions - Mixed	Jack Blows, Sarah Huntley
National Over 50's Doubles Champions	Nic Baxter, Simon Bird
National Triples Champions - Men	Ross Jones, Sam Blakey, Dean Seville, David Plumhoff
National Triples Champions - Women	Emma Longstaff, Sarah Huntley, Tracy Turner, Sabrina Seville
Champion of Champions - Doubles	David Plumhoff, David Franco Cruz
Champion of Champions - Triples	Sofiane Lachani, Reece Gould, Sean Prendergast, Martin Hughes
Champion of Champions - Over 50's	Tony Mann, Jeff Mitchell
Champion of Champion - Shooting	Sean Prendergast
National Veterans Champions	Angie Jamieson, Lee Jamieson, Robert Silvy, Jean-Louis Guiot

EPA EuroCup Champions	Baldock Town PC
EPA Cup Champions	Cobbetts Boules Club
EPA Junior Triples	Alex Spillett, Daniel Raine, Chris Wilmot, Ollie Zimmerman
National Junior Shooting Champion	Daniel Raine



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Future

Last year I presented a plan for investment to take our sport forward over the next 5 years. We are going to look at 5 key areas - Coaching, Youth Development, National Performance, Communication and Organisational Growth. We have made some great progress in some areas, but others require a greater focus in 2017.

	Project	Actions	Status
1)	Coaching	1. Develop Modular coaching programs	Club Coach & Club Coach Advanced in place.
		2. Develop Promotional Material	Work in Progress
		3. Investigate and identify potential external grants	Ongoing as part of development of the County Coach course.
		4. Hire an International Coach	Integrated in the 2017 National Performance Plan
2)	Youth Development	1. Develop existing modular approach for Junior development	Structured training and activity programme, with reviews in place.
		2. Prizes / Incentives aimed at encouraging participation.	Under review
		3. Additional International events for other juniors	Complete programme in place to give players international experience.
3)	National Performance	1. Review performance of National squads at International Championships	Formal reports with statistics are now gathered and analysed.
		2. Prizes / Incentives aimed at encouraging participation.	In place.
		3. Maintain and consolidate Junior squad	On-going development
		4. Implement an Espoirs squad based on the Junior Model	In place.
		5. Develop squad system for Women's International Representation	Squad now in place and programme in place. Work in progress.
		6. Develop squad system for Men's International Representation	Moving towards a squad system with ranking competitions in 2017.
4)	Communication	1. Appoint a Communications Officer	Work in Progress
		2. Evaluate use of social Media - training courses	Under taken a review of our communication aims, Communication Strategy paper in progress
		3. Find sponsorship for outgoing communications	Work in Progress
		4. Review existing opt in / out Options	Ongoing
5)	Organisational Growth	1. Identify and Implement new Management System	Ongoing
		1. Increase number of registered clubs	Increase in clubs between 2016 - 2017.
		2. Increase number of registered members	On target to break 3000 members in 2017



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		3. Develop external organisational relationships	Active members of Sports & Recreation Alliance. Looking to strengthen our relationship with Sport England.
		4. Deliver best practice and knowledge from external relationships to Clubs & Members	Ongoing

Thank you

Finally, some thank yous. We have a great Management Committee who are all very active and involved in the work that needs to be done. This has really helped this year and I have enjoyed working with them.

I must also thank all of the local organisers and clubs for providing venues for us to hold our national events at.

MC's role

The Management Committee's Purpose is to facilitate playing, mainly at the national level through meeting our commitments for international representation but also to support and encourage the grass roots through our Regions and Clubs and provide the structure and guidance they need to facilitate more local playing.

Olympic Recognition Bid

Our International Federation – FIPJP – are working hard to get Olympic Recognition for the 2024 Olympics for our sport, as part of a consortium of related boules sports – Pétanque, Boule Lyonnaise & Raffa.

I encourage you to visit the website www.boules-sport.org/uk/ and support the candidacy.

The Singles, Doubles and Mixed Doubles World Championships in Gent 2017 are a show piece tournament as part of that. If we do attain Olympic recognition it will be a real game changer for our sport.

More volunteers needed

This is a voluntary sport, everyone involved is doing it for fun and giving up their time to play or organise a sport that they love. Things may not always be perfect, or be to everyone's liking but the committee do try to the best of their abilities and with the right intentions. Without people volunteering we would not have a sport.

In particular, we are looking for specialist skills in web design and management, communication and marketing, if you have skills in any of these areas please let me know, but any offers of assistance would be much appreciated, particularly from under-represented groups in our current MC – women and younger people.

As I start my second term we have lots to do and I look forward to the challenges the next 2 years will bring.



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