

Minute of the East of Cricket Association Annual General Meeting held at the Grange Club, Portgower Place, Edinburgh on Thursday 30th January 2025 at 7pm.

1. Welcome and Apologies

Clubs Present:

Bass Rock, Boroughmuir, Carlton, Drummond Trinity, Dunbar, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Academicals, Edinburgh South, Edinburgh University Staff, Gala, Grange, Holy Cross Academicals, Kelso, Kirk Brae, Linlithgow, Livingston, Marchmont, Murrayfield DAFS, Musselburgh, Old Contemptibles, Penicuik, Stewarts Melville and Watsonians. (23)

Apologies for Absence:

Dunfermline and Carnegie, RHC, St Boswells and Westquarter and Redding (4)

Clubs Not Present:

Clackmannan County, Dunnikier, Haddington, Hawick and Wilton, Heriots FP, Leith Franklin Beige, Melrose, Morton, Peebles County, Selkirk, Tranent and Preston Village (11)

Also present:

Tudy Lindblade, the Chief Executive of Cricket Scotland was present along with members of her team – Krishna Kaur (Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion), Charles Patterson (Head of Communications) and Patrick Watson (Scottish Cricket Registration Scheme Administrator).

In advance of the meeting, the Agenda and Accounts had been circulated to club secretaries by email.

In the absence of the President Kash Hussain, owing to family commitments, the meeting agreed that the proposed incoming president, Peter Kingsbury, should take the Chair.

2. Minutes of the 2024 AGM and SGM.

It was explained that owing to administrative difficulties neither of the two minutes was available for consideration. The Meeting accepted the position.

3. President's Report.

In Kash Hussain's absence, Peter Kingsbury read his report to the meeting as follows :-

Good evening, everyone. I want to start by apologising for not being present tonight for the AGM due to the imminent birth of our child.

Tonight marks the end of my 2-year term as President of ESCA, and I want to thank all of the committee members, especially Neil Granger, who played a key role in me taking this opportunity. I want to also thank you all for your help and assistance over the last 2 years.

Reflection on 2024

The last couple of years have been challenging as we looked to make changes per the recommendations from the Changing the Boundaries review. We have worked with other regions and Cricket Scotland to ensure we all move forward in the right direction and collectively look to improve the game. We still have a lot to do, and I'm sure we will continue the good work.

We introduced significant changes last season by bringing coloured clothing and pink balls. I understand this wasn't an easy change for clubs to make for several reasons, but I appreciate everyone getting behind this and making it a success. This change was needed to move on with time and make it attractive to new audiences and youngsters.

We also introduced an experimental fair play system, which has worked well so far. It is up for discussion tonight, and again, we will be advising some changes to ensure this is a robust system that works to ensure fair policing and ultimately improve the experience of people playing the game.

I want to congratulate all the winners of their respective divisions and Edinburgh South for winning the EPL playoff and securing promotion to the EPL. I would also like to congratulate Grange CC for winning the Masterton T20 and Edinburgh CC for winning the Braw Skelp T20.

2025 and Beyond

It looks like we have a number of new teams looking to enter, which gives me great satisfaction that more and more people are taking up cricket. We all have a role to play in bringing more people to the game, and I would love to see people volunteering to help run the game in the east. From speaking to different people and hearing your views on things at the AGM and other platforms, I know we have great ideas and as we have always said if you want to make a positive change, get involved, and let's take the game forward together.

I would like to congratulate Peter on taking over the role of President. Peter has been with the ESCA committee for a number of years now, and I'm sure his experience will be valuable as we continue to make strides toward becoming the best region in Scotland. I also welcome a couple of new people joining the committee and look forward to working with them.

Thank you again. I look forward to another exciting season and wish everyone the best for 2025.

4. Treasurer's Report.

Peter Kingsbury spoke to the Accounts which had been circulated to the clubs by email.

He highlighted that there would have been a deficit on the year had it not been for the credit in terms of new waxed balls received from Readers for sub-standard match balls which meant there had been a small surplus on the year of £ 106.

It was noted that the financial position remained healthy but that in part was as a result of fewer grants being sought for youth and women and girls cricket. It was noted that the League still had no sponsor and it had been agreed that the time was now right to seek a sponsor – anyone with suggestions was invited to contact Peter Kingsbury.

In answer to a question it was confirmed that whilst the finances were in good shape, if the number of grants sought increased then reserves could decrease quickly, but this was not currently anticipated.

It was noted that the funds held at the end of the year were £ 36,175

The meeting APPROVED the Accounts and the proposal to keep the level for subscriptions the same as 2024.

NOTE: *This is £30 per team playing in an ESCA Saturday League and £25 entry fee for the Masterton and Braw Skelp competitions.*

5. Cricket Scotland Update: Trudy Lindblade, CEO Cricket Scotland

Trudy thanked the meeting for its welcome and indicated that since she had spoken to the ESCA AGM twelve months earlier her role had been a busy and challenging one.

She highlighted the on-field success of Scotland teams over the last twelve months with four teams competing in various T 20 World Cups, and also the success of the Australia T20 series staged at Grange in September 2024.

The new four-year strategy had been launched in August 2024 and the aim of CS going forward was to be as good as it can be. The organisation had been removed from Special Measures imposed following the Changing Boundaries report in July 2023 by sportscotland and the foundations were now in place for the organisation and cricket in Scotland to move forward in 2025.

She highlighted that CS hoped to be able to entertain full ICC members for games in Scotland in the years to come but it was not likely at this stage to be every year as there were both infrastructure and financial challenges around putting on such games and that the organisation continued to work with sportscotland and the ICC on numerous matters including funding.

She went on to highlight what would happen in 2025:

The all-encompassing strapline would be "Making Scottish Cricket Better Every Day."

In terms of international fixtures it was hoped that these would be published shortly.

She signalled the intention for a step change in terms of delivering the strategy – the Women and Girls Action Plan would be published in March and that would be followed by the EDI Action Plan. Work was also to be done around working to sustain high performance on the pitch.

Looking further ahead, CS was working with the ECB in relation to cricket at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028 and where Scotland would fit into the GB team and she reminded those present that in 2030, Scotland, along with England and Ireland would host the Men's T 20 World Cup.

She then moved on to the Scottish Cricket Registration Scheme. In advance of a presentation by Charles Patterson and Patrick Watson, she emphasised the importance of the system and the need for CS to have

accurate and informed data to use with sportscotland the ICC and other interested parties, such as potential sponsors.

She indicated that CS wished to work with clubs and to help them get players and supporters to join the system which continued to be free.

She highlighted the importance of the data collected through the scheme in terms of negotiations with the ICC and sportscotland around funding and indicated that the financial position of CS remained tight and that whilst there had been a good financial settlement with the ICC for the current four year cycle, there were no guarantees what post 2028 would look like and therefore a need to collect as much relevant data about the cricketing community for use.

She also highlighted that all governing bodies in sport were now expected to have good accurate data about those playing and involved in the sport to make them effective.

She congratulated Peter Kingsbury on his impending elevation to ESCA President and highlighted the important role he was playing on behalf of the game on the Cricket Scotland Board.

Cricket Scotland Registration System Presentation.

Charles Patterson and Patrick Watson gave a presentation and then answered questions.

They reminded the meeting of the history of the project and indicated how important having players – senior and junior - registered along with supporters for collecting data as indicated by Trudy Lindblade.

The current aim was to encourage all senior and junior players to register on the scheme if possible by 31st March; it remained free of charge. It was confirmed that in terms of the system, parents required to register players under 16 years of age.

They drew attention to the benefits of registration which were listed on the CS website and highlighted the way the information gathered could be used to target resources, would allow those playing to acknowledge they had read the Code of Conduct and was now the primary booking platform for CS for courses and other things.

It was confirmed that the information held on CS and ESCA Live was not sufficient for CS purposes and the scheme was needed as a cornerstone for the future. It was noted that other sports when seeking funding were able to provide detailed data about sports involvement and participation and CS needed to be able to do the same.

The floor was then asked for questions.

The question was raised as to why there could not be a mass import of information for clubs from CS/ESCA Live into the Registration system. It was explained that in addition to data privacy issues, clubs registered players on the current platforms and there needed to be a move to individuals registering themselves on the system.

The question of whether registration was to be compulsory to play was then raised given comments previously when the system was launched and whether there would be a vote on such a matter. There was a dispute about what had been said in previous meetings and Trudy Linblade made it clear that she was

sorry if wrong or inaccurate information might have been given previously. She emphasised the need to look ahead and not back.

It was emphasised that there was a drive to encourage all club and regions to encourage players – senior and junior to register. This was the only way in which CS could gather relevant information needed in discussions with the ICC and sportscotland and with potential sponsors.

It was confirmed that registration to play could not be made compulsory by CS as it did not control the League competitions which were run by individual Associations and that to make registration compulsory Associations would need to change rules – some were already contemplating that.

She confirmed in answer to another question that the system would remain free at this stage but she could not guarantee that would always be the case, but there was an acceptance that there was a need to have a value proposition for members if there was to be a charge. It was noted that other sports did make a charge for registration.

It was emphasised again at this stage that non-registration would not stop a person playing but given the simplicity of registration it was hoped that all clubs would encourage players and supporters to register and it was emphasised that CS was on hand to provide support and help around that.

The Chair clarified matters in terms of ESCA and indicated that to make registration compulsory it would need a change of the constitution or rules and that would require to be considered by a General meeting where any proposal would need to be passed by a two thirds majority.

CS confirmed that part of their plan was to look at the system after 31st March and do a cross check with CS/ESCA Live and advise clubs at that stage to help them who had not registered. There would be subsequent cross checks as the season advanced.

It was suggested that the CS communications to date around the system had been poor and to encourage sign ups they needed to produce a snappy two/three sentence piece highlighting why this was important.

It was confirmed that to date there were around 6,000 members on the system and CS conceded that they now understood that each of the five regions were very different and that a one size fits all approach would not work.

In conclusion CS acknowledged the feedback provided and highlighted the fact that the system could also provide the clubs with data – for example around diversity which might help clubs to shape their approach to members or help with things like grant applications.

Extra item: ESCA Long Service Award – Bill Polson.

Trudy Lindblade then presented a long service award on behalf of ESCA to Bill Polson of Edinburgh South.

Bill had served on the ESCA Committee for forty five years and during that time had also served as Secretary and had run the youth representative teams for a period of over ten years before the creation of the current eastern Knights set up.

The meeting recognised the unparalleled service and commitment given by someone who loved the game and had worked hard to encourage people to play at all levels.

6. Update on Plans for 2025.

A: League Fixtures.

David Gibson indicated that work on drafting the fixtures was ongoing but that they would not be released until after a meeting with Edinburgh Leisure on 26th February in case there were issues regarding venues which were not currently known.

He emphasised that there would clearly need to be games played on Sunday given the lack of Saturday venues for all games and that whilst all fixtures would be scheduled for Saturdays clubs could move fixtures but needed to agree a move to Sunday with their opponents.

He also indicated that for clubs with multiple teams, where Sunday games were needed these should be spread between the teams and that it should not be the case that one particular team played most of their games on a Sunday.

He confirmed the season would run from the weekend of 26/27 April to 23/24 August. This meant the League was starting a week earlier than other Leagues but this was because by the last weekend in August Edinburgh Leisure and school venues were not available because they were being used by other sports, mainly rugby.

B: Ground Availability Challenges.

Phil Yelland highlighted the challenges with Edinburgh Leisure and gave the example of Roseburn Park where some Saturday dates would not be available for public safety reasons - concerts at Murrayfield. He highlighted the fact that Edinburgh Leisure simply hire the pitches out and that ultimately it is the Council who decide whether a venue is available on a particular date.

He highlighted that this can mean on occasion a venue becomes unavailable at short notice.

He emphasised the need for clubs to be understanding and flexible about moving to Sundays.

C: Masterton Trophy & Braw Skelp Trophy.

Ramsay Allan advised that consideration was being given to the Masterton Trophy arrangements for 2025, but after the success of the Finals Day at Grange in 2024, it was likely that a similar format for the competition would be used – this would be confirmed in the coming weeks.

It was also confirmed that entries for the Braw Skelp should be submitted by the end of March.

D: Balls.

Peter Kingsbury indicated that Readers had accepted that there had been significant challenges with the balls provided in 2024, particularly in the wet early season condition. Readers had subsequently provided the same ball with a different finish to combat damp conditions, but these had not really been tested.

He outlined the options for 2025 of staying with the same ball or going with another ball. If we stayed with Readers, a better ball would be significantly more expensive (£45+VAT). It was confirmed that reverting

to a red ball, now coloured clothing was in play, was not possible. It was noted that some felt the ball used in the Challenge Cup had been good, but this ball had been provided by Cricket Scotland.

A more general discussion followed around options, and it was noted that the new Cricket Scotland Domestic Cricket Committee would have the matter of match balls on their agenda to see if they could negotiate a good bulk deal for all clubs in Scotland.

At the end of the discussion the meeting agreed to again use the Readers pink ball for League games in 2025 with the waxed finish and to review the position before the 2026 season once the position in terms of the Domestic Cricket Committee negotiations was known.

E: Captains Forum.

Keith Murray advised the meeting that Cricket Scotland would be holding Captains Forums before the season started. The one for ESCA would be held at the Grange in late March/early April and there was an expectation that at least one captain per club - preferably more - attended. For those who could not attend there would be the option of an online meeting.

The Forums would be led by Cricket Scotland's Conduct in Sport manager Andrew McDowall and the focus would be on the Code of Conduct and the roles that captains should play in terms of player and team behaviour.

F: Feed Back on Experimental Fair Play Rule.

Keith Murray explained that the Committee had received feedback on the experimental rule and were keen to hear more feedback from clubs.

He explained that the Committee were minded to put an extra step into the process with a panel reviewing the scores and comments before a deduction was imposed.

A view was expressed that the current arbitrary system was good and left no room for doubt, but it was explained that there was a feeling that there was a need for a slightly more rigorous review before a deduction was imposed than was currently in place.

It was emphasised the need for the system to remain confidential.

It was noted that the other regions were now in the process of adopting the ESCA Fair Play scheme although at this stage without penalties for consistent low scores

It was also confirmed that in the second half of the 2024 season, four teams who had been on probation had improved their scores sufficiently to avoid penalties.

It was suggested that there might be a need to review the currently mandatory twenty point penalty as that might not be seen as a sufficient deterrent by some teams.

It was confirmed that the revised rules would come to the pre-season Special General Meeting to be discussed and approved. Any comments on the current rules should be submitted at this stage to Keith Murray or Peter Kingsbury.

7. Elections of New Teams.

It was noted that four teams had applied to join the League – Dunfermline and Carnegie 4s, Edinburgh Academicals 4s, Grange 4s and Tranent and Preston Village 6s.

Edinburgh Academicals and Grange spoke to their applications, and it was confirmed that both Dunfermline and Carnegie and Tranent and Preston Village had been in touch setting out reasons for entering a further team – in all cases increased participation was behind the requests.

In terms of ground availability, it was noted that the second pitch at Meadowmill would be available for Tranent and Preston Village for most of the season whilst the SPCU fixtures opened up the use of Broomhall for Dunfermline and Carnegie 3s and 4s for a significant number of Saturdays.

The meeting approved the election of all four teams.

David Gibson indicated that there had been fourteen teams in Division Eight in 2024 and with the addition of four teams, Division Eight would be a normal ten team League whilst Division Nine would have eight teams and fourteen games.

The question of possible regionalisation of the bottom two Divisions was raised but it was explained this had been looked at before and was too difficult in practice to work.

8. Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members.

Peter Kingsbury indicated that details of the posts and those standing had been circulated as part of the Agenda. All those listed were standing un-opposed and a further volunteer had since put their name forward to join the Committee.

The meeting duly elected the following :-

President:Peter Kingsbury (Penicuik)

Vice President:**Vacant**

Secretary:**Vacant**

Treasurer:.....Peter Kingsbury (Penicuik)

Past President:Kash Hussain (Gala)

Committee Members:

Annette Aitken-Drummond (Carlton), Ramsay Allan (Grange), Muhammad Arshad (**Edinburgh???**), David Gibson (Stewarts Melville), Keith Murray (Carlton), Senthil Nathan (Morton), Bill Polson (Edinburgh South) and Jon Turner (Watsonians).

It was noted that Muhammad Arshad and Jon Turner were joining the Committee for the first time.

Honorary Vice Presidents (ex Officio): Allan Baxter and Pat Edington.

It was confirmed that the following roles were filled by Committee Members:-

Competitions Sub Committee Lead:Ramsay Allan
Discipline Sub Committee Lead:Keith Murray
Development Sub Committee Lead:**Vacant**
Social Media and Comms Sub Committee Lead:**Vacant**
Finance Sub Committee Lead:Peter Kingsbury
Women and Girls Cricket:Annette Aitken-Drummond
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:Muhammad Arshad
Appeals Lead:**Vacant**

The following are Non Executive Advisors:

Masterton Operating CommitteeRamsay Allan (Grange)
CSMOA – Match OfficialsGeorge Burns (Grange)
Lothian Juniors and Edinburgh Public ParksPhil Yelland (Murrayfield Dafs)
South of Scotland **Vacant**

The meeting thanked the following members who were stepping down:

Jim Brims (Edinburgh South)

Former President and Secretary and long serving Committee member.

Neil Granger (Marchmont)

Former President who had steered ESCA through Covid, introduced the grants system and put in a huge amount of work around discipline matters.

Sam Dyer (Marchmont)

Former Social Media and Comms Sub Committee lead

Tahir Ahmed (Leith Franklin Beige)

The immediate past Secretary.

9. AOCB.

No other business was raised.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm with thanks to the Chair.