

**MINUTES OF THE 8th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE BRITISH BIATHLON UNION
held at the Hotel Neuwirt, Ruhpolding, Germany
on Saturday 29th January 2005**

BBU BOARD

PRESENT:

Lord Moynihan	(CM)	President
David Cranston CBE	(DC)	Chairman
Andy Cowling OBE	(AC)	Director Army Nordic
Mark Goodson	(MG)	Secretary General and Finance Director
Jeremy Hopwood	(JH)	Sponsorship and Marketing Director
Eddy Lowe BEM	(EL)	Technical and Performance Director

IN ATTENDANCE

Marc Walker	(MW)	Athletes' Representative
Pippa Cranston		Hon Board Secretary

APOLOGIES

Charles Brookes	(CB)	Hon Legal Adviser
Graeme Ferguson MBE BEM	(GF)	Coaching Director

BBU Members: 64 Members were in attendance.

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ITEM 1 – INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming members and thanking them for attending. He extended a special welcome to Lord Moynihan, introduced him to the members and thanked him for the continuing, strong support he gives to the BBU.

ITEM 2 - MINUTES OF THE 7th AGM

DC presented the minutes of the 7th AGM as a true and accurate record of the meeting and no objections were raised. The minutes were accepted and signed by DC.

ITEM 3 – MATTERS ARISING ON ITEM 2

The absence of the Royal Marines at the Championships had been commented on in Item 11 – Any Other Business. DC spoke to Admiral Kerr, Chairman CSWSA, on his return to UK and Admiral Kerr undertook to speak to CGRM. As the Royal Marines are still not present, DC will write to the new CGRM.

ITEM 4 – CHAIRMAN’S STATEMENT

The Chairman congratulated all competitors on having reached the standard required for attendance at the British Championships. He especially congratulated the members of the National Teams and introduced them to the meeting.

The Army were thanked by the BBU for allowing the British Championships to run alongside the Army Championships, which is of benefit to all. DC gave a brief history of the BBU and explained that without the BBU no biathlete would be able to compete at international and Olympic levels. Having also explained that the BBU is a legal company and fully recognised by the BOA, IBU and UK NOC as the governing body for British Biathlon, he introduced the members of the Board to the meeting. He pointed out that the Board is fully executive, each director having an area of responsibility, and that the Board is voluntary, all Board members giving time and money to sustain the sport. The Board were thanked for all their input and hard work during the past year.

During that period the BBU have maintained a Men’s and a Women’s World Cup Team, and also a Men’s European Cup Team. BBU Development courses have been run at East Grange Biathlon Centre and it is proposed that more will be run in 2005. Andy Cowling was thanked for the development courses run by the ABU on behalf of the BBU.

On the financial side, the Chairman was unable to give any good news. The main sponsor remains the Army, and this is only guaranteed until the Turin Olympic Winter Games in 2006. Any bright ideas for raising funding would be welcomed by the Board.

The Chairman concluded by saying how pleasing it is when ex-biathletes give something back to the sport, not just the Board, who are all ex-athletes, but also people like Jason Sklenar, who is playing a large part in coaching and development; Gordon Seaton who is running the development courses; Mike Dixon who is starting a new biathlon club in Aviemore. Such contributions by ex-athletes help to broaden the base of the sport which is so important for the future.

ITEM 5 – ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30TH APRIL 2005

Copies of the Directors' statement and the audited accounts for the financial year 2003/2004 had been distributed to those present. MG explained that, as the BBU is a fully recognised non-profit making company, these had been filed with Companies House in accordance with the law. He then went through the papers giving some detail and explanation, stating that at the end of the financial year the BBU had a £251 surplus. He also pointed out that from time to time, in order to aid cash flow problems, he became a BBU creditor.

He told the meeting that the team accounts were separate as they received some money directly, and that those accounts were audited through the military system.

There was a question from the floor as to why the BBU received money from the BOA- UK Sport. It was explained that at present all non-lottery funded sports received a share of the Olympic Sports Development Fund, but that this was less this year than in previous years and is likely to continue to decrease.

In answer to a question, MG said that Martin Glasgow's (waxman to the WC team) fees and expenses were included in WC team expenses.

DC thanked MG for his report and expressed the Board's discomfort that it was sometimes a necessity for MG to use his credit card on behalf of the BBU. The Board is very grateful for MG's generosity.

DC also mentioned the new policy being adopted by UK Sport with regard to funding only sports with medal success and said that he was presently in correspondence with the Chairman of the BOA on this matter.

The Chairman proposed that the accounts should be adopted and this was unanimously accepted.

ITEMS 6 & 7 – THE RE-ELECTION AND ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

There are three vacancies on the Board. DC was prepared to stand for re-election and Bill Laurence was willing to stand for election.

It was explained that although there were only two nominees for three places, each candidate must receive a majority vote before being elected. Members then cast their votes and the vote forms were collected for counting.

ITEM 8 – THE APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

The appointment of King, Morter, Proud & Co., Chartered Accountants of Kings Arms Vaults, Watton, Brecon, Powys as auditors for the year ending 30th April 2006 was proposed by DC and unanimously accepted.

ITEM 9 – FUTURE PLANS

DC explained that the immediate aim is to enter 4 men and 1 woman in the OWG at Turin in 2006. In order to do this, the WC Men's Team need to stay in the top 20 in the Nations Cup.

At present they are 22nd. Their position has not been helped by the implosion of the Soviet Union, which has brought more countries into the competition, and the enormous efforts being made by China and Japan to increase their sporting prowess. The athletes are well aware of this aim and the Board will do everything possible to help them. Unfortunately there is no National Coach at present. The Board is in ongoing discussion with the BOA about OWG individual qualifying standards.

It is proposed to hold development courses during 2005, if funding permits. The Selection Committee review competitors' performance at the end of this meeting and those showing potential will be offered a place on a Development Course.

ITEM 10 – ABU COACHING AND DEVELOPMENT COURSES

The major contribution the AWSA make to the BBU is the Championships. AC pronounced the 2005 meeting a great success, and congratulated Gavin Thompson and MG for managing such a smooth running competition with £15,000 less than in previous years.

The ABU held a development course in Germany and AC thanked CO 28 Engineer Regiment for releasing Staff Anderson and his team to run the course. It is planned to run another similar course in 2005.

ITEM 11 – SPONSORSHIP AND MARKETING

JH explained that Biathlon is a minority sport, but a growing one. There are more competitors from the UK at the Championships this year and more families visiting to support competitors and thus learning about the sport. There are now two Biathlon clubs in Britain; the British viewing figures for Eurosport coverage of biathlon have risen from 35,000 a couple of years ago to 55,000.

JH has undertaken a couple of mailing campaigns sadly with no success as the age of benevolence in a corporate world has disappeared. The only new corporate sponsor this year has been Henry Brothers, who were approached at the suggestion of a BBU member.

In future any approaches will be made with an angle specifically directed to a particular company.

Another method of sponsorship is to broker a deal between a UK Company and the IBU and JH proposes to investigate this.

The search for sponsorship will continue and CM has generously offered further help for another campaign. However JH would welcome any ideas from any member of the BBU and will follow up all suggestions.

ITEM 12 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 The Board were asked to clarify the situation with regard to OWG qualification . DC replied that it was still under discussion as the Board felt the proposed formula was illogical and unacceptable.

12.2 In answer to a question about the dates for the ABU Development Course, it was confirmed that these would be booked directly after the Championships.

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Before handing over to the President for his closing comments, the Chairman thanked the tellers and announced the results of the elections to the vacancies on the Board:

David Cranston	60 votes
Bill Laurence	56 votes

As they had both received a majority vote, David Cranston was re-elected and Bill Laurence elected to the Board of the British Biathlon Union. The Chairman congratulated Bill Laurence and welcomed him to the Board.

ITEM 13 – THE PRESIDENT’S CLOSING REMARKS

Lord Moynihan thanked the Board for all their hard work during the year and congratulated all those involved in making the championships such a great event. He also congratulated Emma Fowler on her remarkable achievements this season.

He addressed the issue of money going into sport. Because of the way the National Lottery funding is structured, at present only 16 out of 32 sports are receiving Lottery money. When he was Sports Minister, sport received £52M of public money, now sport receives £2.2 billion of lottery money annually to increase participation. Based on the current BBU budget, one year’s fair share of the money would keep the BBU going for 120,000 years!

Recent reports from the National Audit Committee and UK Sport have decreed that all funding should be based on success, which changes the funding criteria from increasing participation in sport to elite performance funding.

He believes that for the long term perspective of all 32 Olympic sports, the money should go into development for eight years, with agreed plans and targets, which would be reviewed after that period.

The money is there, but the issue is whether it is being used correctly? Rather than try to fund participation through schools, it would be better to fund clubs where there are volunteer enthusiasts to provide a broad base for a sport, and to fund NGOs to provide for development which would lead to athletes on the podium. The amount of funding is not the main issue, but how best to allocate and spend the resources, working on consistent funding for winter sports during the time between Turin and Vancouver.

Signed by D A Cranston CBE _____ **Date** _____

Chairman British Biathlon Union