

**MINUTES OF THE 9th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE BRITISH BIATHLON UNION
held at the Hotel Neuwirt, Ruhpolding, Germany
on Saturday 4th February 2006**

BBU BOARD

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Lee Jackson	(LJ)	Athletes' Representative
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APOLOGIES

Charles Brooks	(CB)	Hon Legal Adviser
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BBU Members: 52 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.

ITEM 2 - MINUTES OF THE 8th AGM

DC presented the minutes of the 8th AGM held on 29th January 2005 as a true record of the meeting and no objections were raised. The minutes were accepted and signed by DC.

ITEM 3 – MATTERS ARISING ON ITEM 2

DC expressed his regret that the Royal Marines were still not present at the Championships. Last year he had stated that he would write to the CGRM, however subsequently General Mike Jackson had offered to do this on his behalf. The offer was accepted and General Jackson had written to the CGRM. The issue is still open.

ITEM 4 – CHAIRMAN’S ANNUAL REPORT

DC delivered the following report:

Firstly, many congratulations to all British Biathletes who have reached the demanding standard required to attend the 2006 British and Army Biathlon Championships. Special congratulations go to those athletes in the British National teams who are competing in the World and European Cup competitions during this season.

The British Biathlon Union exists to encourage, promote, develop and control the sport of biathlon in the United Kingdom. Without this National Governing Body, no British biathlete would be able to compete at International and Olympic level. To qualify for the Olympic Winter Games is, of course, the ultimate achievement for any biathlete. It is therefore particularly pleasing to have two of our athletes, Emma Fowler and Tom Clemens, meeting the exacting British Olympic Association qualifying standards to compete in the Turin Olympics. Sadly, because we as a nation, are no longer in the top 20 of either the Men’s or the Women’s Nations’ World Cup, only one male and one female athlete, who meet the qualification requirements, can be sent to these Games. The aspiration remains to regain a position in the top twenty of the Nations’ Cup, certainly for the men, so that we can send more athletes to Vancouver in 2010.

The 2004/05 season began with considerable optimism. A full senior squad was able to train for most the summer in Ruhpolding, whilst most of the National Development ‘A’ Squad trained at East Grange Biathlon Centre. A National Coach had been appointed thanks to the personal sponsorship of Jeremy Hopwood. With the exception of Emma Fowler, the results were disappointing, and during the season the BBU lost the services of the appointed National Coach. However all was not lost as Jason Sklenar after a severe back problem left the WC team and moved from Development Coach to National Coach. Despite a lot of hard work from the athletes, the Men’s World Cup team finished the season in 21st place in the world ranking and therefore lost a starting place at the Olympic Winter Games.

Finally, I would like to thank the fully executive and totally volunteer Board for all their time, hard work, and financial contribution that they have made during the past year.

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

Copies of the audited accounts had been distributed to those present. The Finance Director gave a brief explanation of the accounts,

Motion to accept the accounts for the year ending 30th April 2005:

Proposed: John McIntosh

Seconded: Paul Greenberry

The accounts for the year ending 30th April 2005 were unanimously accepted.

A budget forecast sheet for the financial year 2005/06 was also distributed, showing a projected deficit of £570. MG informed the meeting that both the OSDF and the Army grants were to be withdrawn in the 2006/07 season. In answer to a question from the floor, he said the BBU had been fortunate to have the funds from the Army, but the money was now needed to support the various other military skiing exercises.

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

Andy Cowling and Jeremy Hopwood's three-year tenure as directors of the BBU is due to expire.

Jeremy Hopwood put himself forward for re-election, but AC stood down increasing the vacancies on the Board to three. There were no new nominations.

It was explained that although there was only one nominee for three vacancies on the Board, a candidate must receive a majority vote before being elected. Members then cast their votes and the vote forms were collected for counting.

The Chairman reiterated his plea of previous years for candidates to stand for the Board, as he, MG and EL are founder members of 9 years standing and are getting no younger!

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 Colin Paton, seconded by Paul Whibley and unanimously accepted.

ITEM 9 – THE 4 YEAR BUDGET AND IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF BRITISH BIATHLON

The Chairman stated that at present there can be no 4-year budget. He explained that the British Biathlon Union is facing a very bleak financial situation. Since the BBU came into existence there have been constant efforts to acquire sponsorship. There have been two mailshots over the years and many individual approaches.

It is estimated that the BBU requires £250K per annum to get a podium place. An UK Sport Study suggests that it requires £150K per annum per athlete. The BBU have been getting by on £60K p.a. It is a credit to all involved, particularly to the athletes, to achieve what has been achieved on such limited support.

The Board is still working on acquiring some of the £25K that has been withdrawn by the Army. The OSDF is being reallocated in view of 2012.

Although the Board are continuing to try and find sponsors, they have drawn up a contingency plan on how to continue to exist on an income of £10K. With the agreement of the athletes, a priority list for expenditure has been drawn up and the Chairman assured the meeting that the Board will do all they can to support the athletes and for the sport of biathlon.

ITEM 10 – THE INTERNATIONAL BIATHLON UNION AND OWGs 2010 & 2014

The International Biathlon Union

MG explained that the International Biathlon Union (IBU) is the governing body for the biathlon sport, determining the rules of the sport. It was formed in London in 1993, so Britain has played an historic role. Every two years there is an IBU Congress, this year in Khanty Mansiysk, Russia. The BBU have been approached by the IBU as to whether the Congress could be held in UK in 2008. It would be an honour for Britain, would raise the profile of the sport and possibly have a spin off for the athletes. However it would require considerable organisation and finance, and would not be undertaken unless the BBU were 100% sure that the funding was 100% underwritten. No decision has yet been taken but the meeting was assured that if the BBU did agree **no** finance would come from the athletes' budget.

Olympic Winter Games 2010 & 2014

MG informed the meeting that it was 4 years and 7 days until the start of the Vancouver OWG. The venue has yet to be decided for 2014. At present Britain have one male and one female competing at Olympic level, but there are moves afoot to change the qualification rules. Support from the BOA and UK Sport is limited and it is very difficult to get funding. Emma Fowler has qualified for the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) and it is hoped that at least one other English biathlete may also receive a scholarship under the scheme.

MG encouraged the athletes to consider that the average age of a podium place in biathlon is 29 for females and 31 for males so if they are 21 now ...?!

ITEM 11 – ABU COACHING AND DEVELOPMENT COURSES

BL stated that the focus for development must be the 2010 and 2014 OWGs.

During the year the development programme has made progress largely thanks to East Grange Biathlon Centre. Gordon Seaton and Scotty Banes were thanked for developing the National Squad A team. Currently, two of last season's development athletes and two of this year's are on the European Circuit. The squad have been resident in Scotland, but have also visited Lofer (the British Olympic Association's development centre). It has not yet been decided who will be in this year's squad, nor how many, nor where they will train.

In a military context development involves everyone. Development must continue although more may have to come from the Army Biathlon Union. There is a need to formalise the link between the BBU and the ABU as 99% of Britain's top biathletes are military.

However results are proving that the present development programme is working.

ITEM 12 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no questions from the floor.

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

JH received 46 votes, which was 88.46% of the vote and was duly re-elected to the Board of the British Biathlon Union.

The Chairman congratulated JH.

He then introduced Lord Moynihan and warmly congratulated him on his appointment as Chairman of the British Olympic Association. Sadly, his new appointment means that he must stand down as President of the British Biathlon Union. The BBU have been extremely fortunate in having him work so hard and enthusiastically on its behalf during his years as President. He will be a huge loss to British Biathlon. The Chairman wished him well for the future and assured him of a warm welcome at the British Biathlon Championships in his capacity as Chairman of the British Olympic Association, whenever he wished to attend.

ITEM 13 – THE PRESIDENT’S CLOSING REMARKS

The President began by saying how sad he was to be leaving the BBU as he had enjoyed his involvement with the biathlon sport, but that it was an honour for biathlon that he is taking over as Chairman of the British Olympic Association (BOA).

He stated that he is well pleased when he looks at winter sports as they are all run on tight budgets and he congratulated the Board of the BBU and the athletes on a well-managed organisation. Although he will miss his association, he hopes to assist in other ways.

He assured the meeting that the benefits of the 2012 Summer Olympics would extend to winter sports, and that 2012 provides an opportunity to revive all sport in Britain not just for a few weeks, but changing sport policy in Britain.

In the Summer Olympic Games 2004, Britain was 10th in the medals table. In 2012, it aspires to fourth place, after China, the United States and Russia. (The Chairman mentioned that he has a bet with the Chairman of the Australian Olympic Association of a Magnum of champagne for each medal won ahead of the Australians in the medal table!). In order to do this the best coaches in the world need to be put in place.

The reality is that Britain has excelled in sedentary sports such as rowing. In 2004 there were just 271 British athletes competing, by 2012 the ambition is to have 700 British competitors and to medal in all sport disciplines.

The challenge over the next six years is to improve the whole system of support given to the athletes. This does not just apply to summer sports, but must include winter sports as all sports voted in favour of the London bid and ceded their rights to LOCOG (London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games). In return it is incumbent upon the British to make sure that finance is available for all sport and to recognise that this should apply to Vancouver as well as London. There is an opportunity for existing sponsors to back winter sports as well as summer ones and the idea will be to match winter and summer sports eg

linking yachting with cross country skiing. The top 100 FTSE companies are being encouraged to offer their services to all sports.

The BOA is also working with TASS (Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme) as it recognises that there is a problem with rewarding only the top achieving sports. There is no way to the top without a pyramid base and an emphasis on development so directing money towards the base should be a priority in order to get medals.

The President explained that (LOCOG) is chaired by Lord Coe and the three Stakeholders are represented by Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London; himself as Chairman of the BOA and Tessa Jowell on behalf of the Government. Together they will be putting on the show, but it is up to the British Olympic Association to deliver the sportsmen.

He emphasised that Team 2012 includes 2010 Vancouver and that it is hugely important that equal services and increased development are provided for both seasons. For biathlon this means that the BBU must work with the Army who are also backing Team GB.

British sport is at the beginning of the road that leads to medals. One of the reasons for hosting the Games is to raise the bar of standards, but at the same time the opportunity must be seized to raise British athletic standards.