

MINUTES OF THE SF TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING MON 25 OCT 2010

Members present:- Clive Needham(Ch) Mike Proctor(Sec) Chris Moynihan; Bill Haley; Stephen Mettam; Jon Edison; Chas Dunster.

Invitees present:: Jo Halman BMFA Comp Sec. Peter Allen 2010 BMFA F3J League coordinator

Attending; Robin Sleight BMFA Hon Sec

1. **APOLOGIES.** None but CN & SM were slightly delayed by a slip road closure

2. **MINUTES of PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

(a)Jan 16 2010

7. F3J League Proposal

* **point 3** could not be agreed. Its specific meaning remaining unresolved.

The League co-ordinator, CM & CD thought that the spread of events in the 2010 League was as per the Minutes, with “North” meaning relative to the location of most flyers

The rest of the Committee and the Comp Sec, who had been at the meeting, thought that the one additional meeting would be in Scotland with the rest being located as 2009 ie one at Wetlands and others further south, this being geographically arranged to give UK wide cover from North-South as Minuted

Five of the SFTC members commented on the fact that Wetlands (Retford) was not utilised in 2010 but a competition was scheduled for Upton and it looked as if Wetlands been replaced by Upton, which the League Coordinator denied.

* **point 4** was the subject of more discussion and finally it was agreed that the words *most likely in the South* were removed.

8.AOB (b) “F5F” should read “F3F”

(b) Oct 2 2010-10-28

After a discussion on the Sec’s distribution of the Mins regarding whether Peter Allen a non SFTC member should receive them by email and then contact the BARCS rep who lived computerless nearby - was resolved in favour of them being distributed in that manner.

6 Rule Changes, Leagues & Flying for 2011 Following a long and robust discussion regarding this item, it was decided that to expedite matters an emailed communication from CM and the reply from MP would simply be appended to the these Minutes. These documents reflect the different perceptions of the 2 sections of the SFTC regarding Min item 6.

Following these amendments both sets of Minutes (Jan 16 & Oct 2 2010) were accepted.

Prop CM Sec SM voting AiF (7: 0)

3 **MATTERS ARISING**

Jan 16 item 6 The provisional Nats schedule had been changed subsequent to the meeting to be:-
Sat F3B & Open eSoaring; Sun 2M eSoaring, 100S + F3J; Mon F3J & F3K.

Oct 2 none that were not Agenda items for today.

4. **F3J LEAGUE**

(a) Letter of complaint. The Comp Sec had received a letter of complaint (LoC) regarding the SFTC and the F3J team selection rules. As part of her investigations she had met with the SFTC Chairman & Sec (see Minutes of Oct 2). A few people present even questioned the existence of the letter but the Chair and Sec had seen it, with signatures and identifying items removed to preserve the confidentiality of the writers, and confirmed its veracity. Those same people suggested that the letter had been dated March 2010 but its date was again confirmed as late April.

Much discussion on the Comp Sec’s handling of the complaint followed. The Comp Sec said that she was only concerned with investigating whether any contravention of the rules as referred to in the LoC had occurred. She stressed that the LoC made several points regarding the SFTC and not the League Administrator or BARCs in general. Much discussion on the handling of the complaint followed.

Questioned as to why the LoC had not been made available to all SFTC members she stated that the individuals (6) who had complained were entitled to anonymity and pointed out that her subsequent letter addressed to the SFTC had been posted widely on the internet very soon after the SFTC Secretary had distributed it electronically only to SFTC members. Given that situation, she contended that the LoC would very likely receive the same treatment and that she had been correct to not release the letter. Two options were open to her in dealing with the complaint:

(a) to involve the SFTC initially through the Chair and Sec; or

(b) to empanel three other Tech Com chairmen to hear the complaint and decide on a course of action for the SFTC to follow.

She had chosen the former as she felt that the matter could be better dealt with “in house”.

She stressed that the letter she sent to the SFTC covered all the points contained in the LoC.

She apologised unreservedly for the late letter she had sent and emphasised that her letter gave suggestions – it did not impose proposals. The Chairman pointed out that he had put together the document with the suggested F3J League rule changes that would be necessary if the latter of the Comps Sec’s two suggestions was adopted and which had been distributed at the last meeting.

The Comp Sec reminded the meeting that the BMFA Competition Secretary is ultimately responsible for all official BMFA competitions. General Rule 2.2.1 and that rule changes are required to be submitted to the Technical Secretary by 1st November each year. General Rule 2.5.2 (b).

Once the Comp Sec had begun her investigation of alleged rule breaches she discovered more rules that had not been followed. The ones specifically brought to the meeting’s attention were:

(a) That Team Selection events were not published in the BMFA News Contest & Events Calendar as required. BMFA General Rule 2.1.3 (e)

The F3J League Coordinator stated that he had sent them to the BMFA Office for publication and when they were not included in the following issue of the BMFA News, he again contacted the BMFA office. As they had been published on the BARCs website he did not make further representations.

(b) The team selection events were not “fair and equitable” (with regard to locations). BMFA General Rule 2.1.3 (c).

SF Rule 7.9.1.1.1. states “to encourage wider participation” and this could not be the case with the locations used during 2010.

Much discussion again centred on mileages and that Scottish flyers would have to travel many more times further than those in the Midlands & South of England to compete in the events.

(c) Locations had not been decided by the SFTC. BMFA General Rule 2.1.3 (c) & See point 2 of these Mins.

(d) Under the existing rules some of the 2-day events were not eligible. SF Rule 7.9.1.1.4 (f)

It seemed clear that this situation required clarification in the rules. The Comp Sec also made it clear that it is an FAI rule that FAI licences are required by any competitor taking part in any FAI sanctioned competitions. One of the F3J League team selection events was Interglide which was also an FAI Sanctioned competition – part of Eurotour – and it was listed on the FAI sporting calendar yet eight of the people who flew in that competition did not have FAI licences including the F3J League Coordinator. In those cases the results are considered invalid.

Questioned as to how F3J League events might be organised she reiterated the two suggestions she made in her letter to the SFTC: either two geographical areas or two leagues and a team trials. There were relatively few Scots and northern flyers but they were entitled to fair access to events. It was pointed out that Team Trial events, which Silent Flight discontinued some time ago were a consequence of the above system and were generally disliked for various reasons. The League system had replaced TTs. The Comp Sec commented that a team selection league was the method most employed by Technical Committees. Only Free Flight used two dedicated team trials competitions.

It was unanimously agreed that League events should follow the principle of being fair and equitable and that “fair” meant being within a reasonable travelling distance. The F3J League Coordinator commented that

the Scots could fly as many F3J events as they liked but SM pointed out that they wished to fly within the team selection League system.

Considerable discussion took place on how the country should be divided if “geographical” team selection events took place.

RS suggested a league scenario that would require a minimum re-writing of the existing rules and it was based on 4 events being held in the “North” and 4 in the “South” on the same day plus three 2-day events. Any one of these two-day competitions would be mandatory if all three took place. For Team selection any 4 events (to include one 2-day) would count.

The Comp Sec and some of the SFTC felt that none of the league events should be mandatory which is usually applied only to dedicated team trials.

Considerable discussion took place on the merits of RS’s suggestion and on the “two leagues (northern and southern) plus a team trials” system.

Finally 2 proposals were developed which contained details which were discussed and agreed as they were being formulated and a formal vote was taken:-

Option A - Principle of Competition Areas

1. These principles are to be read in conjunction with the existing rules which shall be amended as necessary to encompass the principles of fair and equitable Team Selection competitions.
2. That four one-day TS comps are staged on the same day in the north and the south of the country.
3. Three two-days competitions shall be held in a centralised area of the country.
4. Any one of these two-day competitions shall be mandatory if all three take place.
5. The results of the one-day and two-day competitions are consolidated into the existing national league structure.
6. Competition venues are subject to the definition of the northern and southern areas.
7. Reserve dates published at the beginning the season.
8. North is defined as north of and including Lancashire & Yorkshire plus Wetlands.

Voting: Prop: CN Sec: CM For: 6 Ag: 1 Abs: 0

Option B - Principle of Formal Leagues with a Team Trial

1. Two leagues: Northern & Southern
2. With a proportion of each league entitled to attend a TT competition to decide the 3-man team and the reserve.
3. The above proportional on the numbers of entrants that meet the team selection criteria.
4. At the beginning of the season, entrants must nominate the league in which they intend to compete.
5. Seven competitions with four to count.
6. North of and including Lancashire & Yorkshire plus Retford.

Voting: Prop: CN Sec: SM For: 1 Ag: 6 Abs: 0

The discussion ended with various Actions required.

It was agreed that RS would draft rules and rule changes to accommodate the principles in Option A and pass it by CM and the League Coordinator before sending them to the SFTC members. He would brief the BARCs AGM regarding these rule changes and give any feedback to the SFTC.

The “shape” of 2-day events was questioned and it was stated that they were usually designed to finish in the early afternoon of the second day (Sunday usually) to enable flyers time to get home at a reasonable hour.

The Chair would write a description of a 2-day event for clarification. (Appended)

Bonus points being awarded for Fly Off places was discussed as was the awarding of such bonus points for the “best Brit” in foreign events, even though they may not have reached the fly-off. The League Coordinator said that this was a mistake in the rules which needed correcting. Some SFTC members felt that fly-off bonus points were undesirable in any case but CD said that they were useful in avoiding ties at the top of the League.

5. AOB

- a) The Treasurer reminded the Meeting that the Assets register would be circulated for completion.
- b) BMFA Comp Sec confirmed the following dates during a discussion on the requirements for TM's 2011 W Ch F3K (Sweden) 3-10 July; Euro Ch F3J (Slov) 18-27 Aug; W Ch F3B 23-29 Sept (China) ;
The Sec would advise the BMFA News editor of the necessary TM adverts.
(it was noted that the F3J event would clash with 2011 Nats events)

6. NEXT MEETING

11 DEC 2010 was chosen as the date for the first meeting of the new SFTC, provided all potential members could manage that date. CM was to check with those not present and report back.

Appendages

(A)

2 Day event description (Clive Needham)

Rule book page 56

7.9.1.1.3. DEFINITION OF A LEAGUE CONTEST.

Change paragraph (d) thus (d) becomes (f)

A CONTEST MAY ONLY BE DEFINED AS A VALID TWO/MULTI DAY COMPETITION IF AT LEAST 6 (SIX) ROUNDS ARE COMPLETED

2 (TWO) FLY-OFF ROUNDS MUST ALSO BE COMPLETED.

The fly-off rounds must not be started later than 5-00pm and be completed no later than 6-00pm.

In the event of bad weather the competition shall be valid even if the contest is completed in 1 (one) day as long as the above conditions are met.

REASONS.

It has often been stated that the necessity of making at least one compulsory contest part of the selection process is to ensure the pressure is more like that of a championship event.

Thus, as could be the case, a so called 2 day event could comprise 1 round on one day and 2 rounds on another and still qualify as a compulsory scoring contest in which case the above could not be said to apply.

Regarding the time of starting fly-offs, consideration must be given to how late the contest may continue taking into account the distances that some competitors may have to travel and possibly go to work the next day.

I appreciate that new FAI rules will apply from 1st Jan regarding the number of rounds required for discards to apply.

However whether this will apply in the BMFA variations is still to be decided.

(B)

MP Replies (highlighted) to points in CM letter of 8 Oct. Appended to SFTC MIns of 25 Oct 2010

I believe that the minuted text covering the discussion of the F3J league issue has some unacceptable omissions.

First, it was agreed that at the March 2010 SFTC almost a whole afternoon had been spent discussing and agreeing the league organisation, via P Allen and BARCS, to which the SFTC had agreed unanimously.

Correct, that did happen and the Minutes were circulated to that effect at that time.

Second, it was stated that a minute of that meeting should be available at the next meeting, and should have been available at the 2/10 meeting, before recycling the debate based on hearsay from the Comp Sec and with no evidence of the originating complaint, allegedly supported by some six unnamed proponents.

Minutes of meetings have always been available before and I have often re-circulated them with the Agenda of the Meeting concerned for those who have trouble finding them. This time I decided to copy them along with the other documents to be sure everyone had them then left them on the table at home! Amazingly, as they were so important, nobody else on the SFTC brought them to the meeting. Your comments suggesting the complains were based on hearsay from the Comp Sec fly in the face of what was clearly stated on more than one occasion. Clive and I saw the text content of the letter, there was no suggestion of anything being hearsay. There was no "recycling of the debate" as it was clearly stated that the complaint was against the SFTC in not causing the F3J League to be run as previously agreed. I don't think the Organiser was in fact criticized.

Third, I made it clear that there is an agreed procedure within the BMFA for handling grievances, which had not been followed in this case.

Details or link please so that all can see. My understanding is that if a TC can not agree a decision it is reviewed/decided by a Committee of 3 other TC Chairmen. If we cannot agree that seems a fair system to me and maybe we should opt for that asap?

Fourth, it was not agreed by all that the matter should be finalised at an SFTC meeting on 25/10....(I did not agree)...that the matter needs to be resolved at the meeting on 25/10 to meet the spurious 'deadline' of 1st November.

This quite simply is untrue. I asked very clearly to all and yourself specifically, that at the Monday meeting coming there would be a will to resolve this situation and you said "Yes". The others followed suit. Further all TC members received a note from the BMFA Office 21/9 I think, stating unequivocally that Nov 1 was the due date. The note regarding Specialist Bodies AGM does not apply, as BARCS are not so required to approve these rules, they take part in their formulation.

Fifth, it was stated categorically by some attending that the short lead time...less than 12 hours...of this topic being an issue for discussion on 2/10.was unacceptable, particularly as no communication was entered into by the secretary to circulate the info to the league coordinator or BARCS rep on the committee at any time prior to the meeting on 2/10..

Correct, the lead time was unacceptable but forced on me because the documents were not available to me until minutes before I circulated them late on Friday. The fact that I (and Bill Haley) suggested a second meeting to give time to better prepare are evidence of my feelings in this respect. I chose not to make any prior comment because there was nothing of substance that I could circulate and I knew full well that even incomplete data circulated to the SFTC would be widely available to all and sundry in seconds, as I see it was from some subsequent comments on the web.

The BARCS rep is un-contactable at short notice, I have kept him informed by mail since and brought him a copy on the day. The League Organiser was not attached to the list I sent but he was copied (above) and by phone before the meeting.

Sixth,clearly the Chair and Secretary of the SFTC had entered into lengthy and detailed discussions with the BMFA Comp Sec approximately a week prior to the 2/10 meeting without raising the matter with either the BARCS Rep, the F3J League coordinator or even giving the other members of the SFTC the courtesy of appraising them of the issue.

Just over 1 hour whilst at work in my case, the rest is covered in 5

Seventh, the SFTC Chair and Sec then used the intervening week or so to compose a highly detailed and expansive F3J League proposal thus negating their logic of there being insufficient time to advise the remaining SFTC members of the issue.

I did not spend any of the next week composing such a document See above timescale

Eighth, by taking this next step of preparing a new league proposal, these two officers have clearly accepted the hearsay complaints prior to any discussion of the allegations with either the organising delegated body, BARCS,

the league organiser, the rest of the SFTC or indeed any of the F3J Pilot community and by so doing have demonstrated that they have signally failed to test the veracity or extent of the allegations.

First see above again. For the umpteenth time the complaint concerned the SFTC, not the League or pilots.

I believe strongly that this unacceptable series of actions and processes and the failure to minute the true content of the meeting demands urgent and immediate remedial action by the Chair and Secretary. I believe these minutes which have been issued to the wider BMFA Senior membership should be withdrawn with a clarifying statement that the minutes are actively contested, that they were only a draft unapproved version and in any event their wider publication was unnecessary at this stage and could have awaited the 25/10 meeting for their approval as is constitutionally and procedurally required.

As is all cases Minutes are distributed and Approved at the following meeting. Where they are modified it is so noted. This is standard procedure and has been for very many years. The Minutes have had their normal distribution, I do not understand the term "wider BMFA Senior membership" in this context

It is also noted that the Secretary again failed to include Mr P Allen in his email circulation of the minutes, which he agreed to do at a previous SFTC meeting, thus again failing to afford the BARCS rep the opportunity to comment on the minutes before they were sent to to BMFA Admin for wider circulation.

The BARCS rep was in receipt of the Minutes by post as he requested at the meeting.

Rgds
Chris Moynihan