



DISCUSSION FORUM MINUTES

Monday, 19th September 2022
held at Croquet SA Headquarters, Hutt Road, Adelaide

1. Attendance:

- 1.1. **Delegates:** Alan Sands (Croquetwest), Kate Patrick (VCA), Kate McLoughlin (CNSW), Geoff Crook (SACA), Sue Beatty (CTas)
- 1.2. **Board Members:** Jim Nicholls (Chair), Max Kewish (Deputy Chair), Kerri-Ann Organ, Barbara Northcott, Pat Habner
- 1.3. **Board Officers & Appointees:** Jim Clement (Secretary), Greg Bury (Academy GM), Ros Crowe (NCGb), Barb Piggott (ANCC), Peter Freer (Chair, Events Committee)
- 1.4. **Apologies:** Kah Yang Loke (Treasurer), Rob Murray (Executive Officer)
- 1.5. **Observer:** Maurice Cevaal-Hewitt

2. **Opening:** The Chair opened the meeting at 9:40 am, welcoming all present.

3. For Discussion:

3.1. **Gender Policy:** The Chair introduced the topic, thanking Janine McHardy for putting this on the agenda, stating that ACA had adopted the SportAus guidelines and notified WCF, which subsequently developed a policy which is very black & white. Sue Beattie mentioned oestrogen levels & testing. Also queried mostly male coaches not understanding female bodies.

Geoff Crook – not enough data, more required; real question is “is there performance enhancement”?

Kate Patrick noted that WCF policy emphasises inclusiveness but recognises that members countries may have different standards. Also queried age v strength

Alan Sands – emphasised fairness and equity in elite sport. Used example of US male-to-female-transitioned swimmer, Lia Thomas.

Kate McLoughlin – more emphasis on training of women with pathways, etc. to increase ratio of women in top competition; increase participation at all age groups – gender is just one part of participation barriers.

Ros Crowe – other sports use non-binary categories - in croquet, does gender really matter?

Decision: Short to mid-term – continue with men’s, women’s, and open events.

Conduct surveys within ACA.

Commission research to decide whether ACA requires development of a policy.

3.2 **Club Constitution Template:** Rejected.

3.3 **Volunteers:** The Chair noted that the had recently attended the National Sports Convention and the question of volunteers is a matter of importance to all sports. Max Kewish spoke to his paper (attached)

3.4 **The Future of Governance of Croquet in Australia:** The Secretary spoke to the paper (attached); delegates agreed that it requires communication with clubs and individual members.

4. Kate Patrick proposed an expression of congratulations to the winners & runners-up of the Men’s (Gary Phipps & Ross Rillie) and Women’s (Jamie Gumbrell & Elaine Coverdale) Championships and the Interstate Shield (NSW & WA). Carried by acclamation.

5. **Close:** The Chair closed the meeting at 11:28 am.



Item 3.1 - ACA Gender Policy

Background

There is not a gender policy document on the ACA website. Should ACA follow the WCF policy, which states that the only requirement for a male to enter a women's event is that the person identifies as female?

However, the Sports Australia policy makes it fairly clear that a key consideration is determining whether strength, endurance and physique play a part in a sport. Given the above policy, it appears that WCF has determined that these factors DO NOT contribute.

If this is the case (and assuming that this is also ACA's position), then what metrics/logic were used to determine that strength, endurance and physique are not relevant to croquet.

This position, specifically regarding its application to elite women's golf croquet, should be challenged, based on:

1. The experience and opinion of elite women GC players and the role of strength, endurance and physique;
2. Elite GC player rankings of men/women;
3. Results of Open GC events;
4. Other stick sports and similar sports gender policies.

1. Strength, Endurance and Physique Endurance

Elite GC tournaments span many hours and multiple days. Superior male muscle mass would provide a male player with greater endurance. This may be reflected in lower levels of muscle fatigue and therefore higher levels of hitting accuracy, particularly towards the end of a day / end of a tournament.

Strength

Greater strength supports longer clearances, thus reducing the % success rate of the return shot.

Greater strength supports longer and more consistently accurate jump shots. Not many, if any Australian women players that can consistently do a 7 yard jump shot BUT many males can. (Anecdotally, a woman lost a game to a male player 5-7 and two of his hoops were won with jump shots - one was a 7 yard and the other a 12 yard jump shot. This was a player with a 3 handicap. No female player I'm aware of can do a 12 yard jump shot, let alone one on a 3 handicap!) While jump shots are only a small part of the game, there is a definite difference between males and females with this shot.

Physique

Superior muscle mass provides both the abovementioned strength and endurance advantages.

2. Elite GC Player Rankings

Of the top 100 players in the world, only 15% are women. In the top 500, only 17% are women.

Statistics don't bear out women and men being competitively equal at the elite level and some aspect of this must surely be due to physiological differences. If elite GC was truly a gender neutral sport then there should be less disparity in the statistics. While one wouldn't necessarily expect an even 50/50 split I do believe that if elite GC was truly a gender neutral sport there would be more than 17% women in the top 500 world players.

3. Results of Open GC Events

Of the top 100 players, 50 are from Egypt and 10 of these players are women (20%).

The Egyptian singles tournament each year on Croquetscores.com has results below. These women players play an aggressive, hard hitting game and yet are still not making it into the finals or winning the open event.

2013 - male winner, 0 women in finals

2014 - male winner, 0 women in finals

2015 - male winner, 0 women in finals

2016 - male winner, 1 woman in Qtr finals

2017 - male winner, 0 women in finals

2018, male winner, 1 woman in Qtr finals

2019 - male winner, 2 women in first round of finals block but 0 in Qtr finals

2020 - no record

2021 - male winner, 0 women in finals

The situation is similar in Australia. Looking at the ACA GC Open Singles scores on Croquetscores.com, a woman has won the event only twice since 2012. The President's 8s First 8s has only once been won by a woman.

If croquet was a gender neutral sport, then one would expect to see a few more of the open events being won by women. Again, certainly not a 50/50 split but perhaps less of a discrepancy.

4. Other Sports Policies

Relevant points from similar sports gender policies include:

- Transgender males can compete in elite female event if they meet defined hormonal metrics; - At the 'community' (non-elite) level, transgender and gender diverse people can compete in the gender based events that feel most appropriate to them (ie no hormonal metrics testing required);
- Transgender and gender diverse can play in non-competitive /social situations in the gender based events that feel most appropriate to them (ie no hormonal metrics testing required).

Lawn Bowls

This is the UK policy:

<https://www.bowlsengland.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Trans-and-Gender-DiversePolicy-Final-May-21.pdf>

An interesting point in the policy is this:

‘Whilst the physical demands of bowls are more modest than most sports, it is still a genderaffected sport’.

The same could easily be argued of croquet.

This policy requires testosterone level testing for elite level events.

Croquet’s current gender policy is not in alignment with other stick sports or lawn bowls.

There has been a lot of information in the news recently about various sports reviewing their policies and most appear to be moving away from inclusion of transgender males in female elite sport regardless of whether they meet hormonal level metrics. It may be that transgender players who meet the defined hormonal criteria (and are therefore more equal to females in terms of strength, endurance, and physique) should be allowed to play croquet, and that’s what our policy should state - which would bring it into alignment with most other sports - and not allow males to compete on the sole condition that they identify as female.

This is a difficult, challenging and evolving issue.

References/Links:

IOC Framework

<https://olympics.com/ioc/news/amp/ioc-releases-framework-on-fairness-inclusion-and-nondiscrimination-on-the-basis-of-gender-identity-and-sex-variations>

Sports Australia Policy

https://www.sportaus.gov.au/integrity_in_sport/transgender_and_gender_diverse_people_in_sport#A_4_what_does_the_law_say

4.3(b)(iii)

Any competitive sporting activity in which strength, stamina or physique of competitors is relevant.

WCF Gender Policy

<https://worldcroquet.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/WCF-Gender-Policy-version-1.0.pdf>

UK Lawn Bowls Policy

<https://www.bowlsengland.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Trans-and-Gender-DiversePolicy-Final-May-21.pdf>

Tennis Gender Policy

<https://play.tennis.com.au/Library/rydebalmaintennis?command=Proxy&lang=en&type=Documents¤tFolder=%2F&hash=d5a85bf3e387d3c1d3c8c6dcc6c1a06ea93242a5&fileName=TA%20Transgender%20Inclusion%20Guidelines%20-%20OFFICIAL.pdf>

Golf Australia Gender Policy

[https://assets.ctfassets.net/3urhge2ecl20/70dl2y9M3BLFFQZuX299EK/95d56dab2996d4319c03c647baf94a86/Golf Australia - Gender Policy May 2016 .pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/3urhge2ecl20/70dl2y9M3BLFFQZuX299EK/95d56dab2996d4319c03c647baf94a86/Golf_Australia_-_Gender_Policy_May_2016_.pdf)

Tennis Australia Community Gender Policy

<https://cdn.revolutionise.com.au/cups/hockeyaus/files/9n8okxzogvylxmu.pdf>

Cricket Australia Gender Policy <https://www.cricketaustralia.com.au/cricket/-/media/06C25E79604A4F9D9A27637626B7D09E.ashx>

Recommendations

Financial Implications



Jim Clement
Secretary to the Board



Board Briefing paper
ACA Forum meeting.
19th September 2022.

Item 3.3 - Volunteers

Background.

ACA Board and the State Associations are experiencing difficulties getting nominations to fill vacancies.

Value of Volunteers.

- Change of attitude of members to volunteering for Board/State associations and clubs' management committee positions.
- ACA Board not able to get enough volunteers for the Board. Have two State Presidents on the ACA Board
- State Associations not getting nominations from volunteers for management committee positions.
- Future of Board/State Associations Management Committees structure.

Discussions.

1. Some possible actions:

- Raise the affiliation fees and employ committee members?
- Disband State Associations and have one controlling body -the ACA Board?
- Conduct survey of volunteers?
- Employ the five elements for volunteers.
- Acknowledge the volunteer needs.

2. Volunteers - five elements to get and retain their services:

- Make it feel like they belong.
- Make it easy for them to get involved.
- Tailor roles to meet needs.
- Support the volunteers.
- Create value for them, the club, and the whole community.

3. Volunteers need:

- to feel that they have the knowledge (Give them training)
- to feel effective
- to feel part of a group
- to receive organisational support
- to have a voice that is heard.

Max Kewish

President
Croquetwest



Briefing Paper
ACA Discussion Forum
19th September 2022

Item 3.4 – The Future of Governance of Croquet in Australia

Background

Note that, in this paper, boards and committees are referred to as boards, and members of those boards, as directors.

Recently, both the ACA Board and State Associations' Boards have been experienced difficulties in attracting members to sit on such boards.

Croquet Australia has had a Board vacancy since the March 22 AGM. Croquet Victoria did not receive nominations for the positions of President and Secretary at its recent (June 22) AGM. Croquetwest has received less nominations that there will be vacancies at its forthcoming AGM. There are also other anecdotal instances of the difficulty in filling board/committee positions.

Other sports, that like ACA operated on a federalised structure (a national body, and state & territory governing bodies) have successfully changed to one, national governing body for Australia; cycling is an example, which has successfully drawn together governing bodies for different forms of cycling, and the appropriate state governing bodies into one national body, AusCycling.

Elected directors:

ACA	7
CAQ	3 (plus 7 regional delegates)
CNSW	7
VCA	9 (plus 14 regionally appointed directors)
CTas	7 (includes 2 regional representatives)
Croquet SA	6
Croquetwest	8
Total	47 (plus 21 regional delegates/directors)

Further, the ACA Board currently contravenes Sports Australia Governance Principle 4 states that "...an individual should not be on a state and national board of the same sport." as has done so in the past.

Is this because there are insufficient members interested in the governance of their sport to fill all positions without duplications?

For Discussion

Is it time to consider the implications of a single nation-wide governing body for croquet & gateball?



Jim Clement
Secretary to the Board