

MAG Update Note for National Council – February 2022

Overview

There has been one MAG meeting during the period. This was in December. The notes of the meeting are on the MAG Section of the TTE website. Topics discussed included MAG's input into the TTE strategy development process, projects update and MAG's contribution to TTE initiatives (Competition Review and Diversity & Inclusion). The next meeting is planned for March.

Adrian Christy (the new Interim Chief Executive) joined the first part of the December meeting. Adrian outlined his experience in sports management and administration. He had worked for the National Governing Bodies of three racquet sports, the National Coaching Foundation and in Local Authority sports development. We explained MAG's role in advising the Board based on our project work and engagement with the table tennis community.

Dan Simms has informed MAG that he has stood down as a MAG member. He has explained that this is due to increasing business commitments as a result of taking on a new role. There are also exciting development opportunities for the club which he Chairs and he needs to prioritise these. Dan has offered to remain as a "sounding board" for MAG as the need arises. Dan played a leading role in formulating the project-based approach that MAG has adopted. MAG members have thanked Dan for his contributions to MAG and have wished him well for the future, particularly in taking forward the development opportunities for his club.

Projects

1. **Clubs Development** – the second meeting of the Clubs Development Action Plan working group took place in December to finalise the action plan. A large majority of the issues raised in the Clubs Development report were expected to be considered as part of the forthcoming TTE strategy plan for clubs. Those issues that may not be included in the clubs strategy are already in the process of being addressed elsewhere, eg as MAG projects, as part of the Competition Review and as part of the overall TTE strategy refresh.
2. **Retention & Recruitment of Members** – The "quantitative research" phase of the project has now been completed. An extensive data set has been compiled of the age-profile of the TTE membership. This covers the TTE membership as a whole, female members, large leagues, and smaller leagues. The impact of a large club on membership profile has been included. A strikingly similar pattern is produced in all cases. Membership rises rapidly in the 10-15 age-group, but by the age of 22, 80% of those who were playing competitively at age 15 no longer do so. Membership remains flat until the 40-45 age group whereupon it rises steadily peaking at age 55 before slowly declining from age 65 onwards. TTE membership has two peaks in membership – one at age 15 and the other at age 55. This is an interesting profile. The "qualitative research" is now underway. We are engaging with a range of current and ex-members to understand the reasons why they have stayed with the sport, left the sport or recently returned to the sport. We are doing this via personal contacts and by open invitation on Facebook. Ideally, we want to understand how we can reduce the proportion of members who stop playing between the ages of 18 and 22, and how we can bring forward the age at which players return to our sport. This would have a massive impact on our membership. Once the "qualitative research" has been completed, a MAG report will be published.

3. **Club Participation in National Competitions** – one of the issues raised during the Clubs Development project was that TTE National Competitions should more proactively support the development of clubs. In particular, it was felt that British League should only accept entries from “proper clubs” (not specifically defined). There was concern that “clubs-of-convenience” were being created purely for the purposes of entering teams in British League. This was one of the issues that MAG agreed to investigate following the “Clubs Development” project. Preliminary analysis of the data suggests that around 80% of teams in British League competitions are from Premier and Associate clubs. Only 15% are from “unregistered” clubs – many of which would meet the definition of being “proper” clubs. Only 15 teams of the 300 teams that participate in British League might be considered to be “teams of convenience”. This does not suggest that there is a significant problem with “teams of convenience” in British League competitions. Work and data analysis is on-going but when complete a MAG report will be published.
4. **Transparency & Accountability** – no further progress made in completing the MAG report on Transparency and Accountability. But it is hoped to issue this in the next quarter.

Neil Hurford
Chair
Members Advisory Group

February 2022