

Minutes of the
British Weight Lifting Board Meeting

Date: Wednesday 10 June 2020
Start: 13.00
Venue: Video Conference Call

Present: Angus Kinnear (AK), Ashley Metcalfe (AM), Jane Fenwick (JF), Neill Wood (NW), Rupinder Ashworth (RA), Kelly Sotherton (KS), Guy Taylor (GT), Matthew Curtain (MC), Mike Irani (MI)

In attendance: Kath Leonard (KL), Mark Martin (MM), Tom Whittaker (TW)

1 Welcome and Apologies

AK welcomed everyone to the meeting, noted full attendance and declared the meeting quorate. He thanked everyone for their support through these challenging times.

2 Declarations of Interest

AK reminded members that the proceedings of the meeting were confidential and asked if there were any conflicts of interest. KS noted she had attended a team meeting for England Athletics and had been involved in their funding submission to Sport England. MI noted he was on the Executive Board of IWF but had no specific declarations to make.

3 Minutes from Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 17 March 2020 were agreed as read and **approved** for posting on the website.

4 Decisions Taken outside the Board Meeting

Sport England 2021/22 funding agreement – AM advised that a key decision had been made to accept the rollover funding from Sport England (same amount as in year 4) which was formally approved retrospectively by the Board.

5 Minutes and Recommendations from the Sub-Committees

England Committee – MC noted the Committee had met. He advised that key matters discussed/agreed were the acceptance of the new TOR and whilst the tenure of most

members had expired, all had agreed to continue for a second term. The new TOR makes provision for an athlete representative so the Committee are to undertake a recruitment process, seeking engagement from Sarah Davies (as athlete representative on the BWL Board) and noted the next meeting of Committee will be held in July. MI asked about links with Northern Ireland. MC responded that the TOR of the Committee is to drive activities for England. AM noted that Northern Ireland and Ireland Weightlifting are independent bodies, but discussions are ongoing about how to improve relationships in Ireland as a whole and move forward in a more united manner.

Commercial and Development – RA noted that a meeting had been held to explore further options around the new concept competition and a further meeting would be held virtually to finalise plans which would be reported at the next meeting.

There were no further reports from the other Sub-Committees.

6 CEO Overview on COVID-19

AM provided an update on COVID-19 noting the initial requirement had been to look at the immediate impact of the pandemic especially on the operational strategy and organisational finances.

AM noted that the original budget was now inaccurate and out of date due in main to the extended length of the lockdown than initially expected and the prospect of extra support or additional funding options from key stakeholders was unlikely. BWL was further restricted by the inability to furlough employees as roles were already either fully or part-funded by the Government. He also added that the length of shutdown would in all probability make it extremely challenging to achieve originally agreed full year targets, whether development, performance or financial.

AM added the second part of the operational strategy was around adapting and changing operations to get the organisation back on its feet. The key priority had been driving the digital transformation programme to drive potential new revenue streams. AM confirmed operationally the key focus was to accelerate the development of online coach education and competition opportunities alongside maintaining improved communications and the latest legal guidance to members and clubs.

Longer term, the team had challenged the pandemic's impact on the organisation's overall strategy and examined what could be learned and whether anything needed to be changed to ensure operationally the organisation could improve or be more efficient in future. It was **agreed** that that the board would continue to monitor the appropriateness of the original strategy and that the Executive would present a further half year review around operational structures and plans at the next meeting.

7 Finance Matters and Update

MM gave an overview of draft year end results for 2019/20 advising the figures were better than expected showing a modest profit of £22,000 due in main to higher course income and

several costs savings. This was against an original break-even budget and consequently the reserves had improved to £130,000.

Management Accounts for April 2020 – MM reported a loss of £7,000 in April against a budget of £4,000 profit.

MM felt this was a more realistic picture and one that would be replicated throughout the year due to the prolonged impact on all independent revenue streams because of COVID-19. MM advised the resulting re-forecast for the year now indicated a loss of £133,000, which would place the organisation in a potentially challenging position by March 2021 and questionable as a going concern.

MM presented a re-modelled forecast (B) which showed following a reduction in expenditure a loss of £58,000 and ensured reserves of £72,000 were available for future years.

AM advised that the original budget had been developed following advice that the original estimated time for business interruption was three-months and the original budget had worked on an estimated return to normality in terms of generating income streams by July. It was now clear that the impact of Covid-19 would be both longer and more severe, which would also negatively impact development and performance targets. AM reiterated the view of MM that the only way to realistically reduce the potential worst-case losses would be from a cost savings perspective as improved income generation would be unlikely.

MC asked if the headcount were to be reduced, what areas would be affected and would it negatively impact the operational plan. AM responded this was being investigated but the plan would be to ensure minimal impact on the running of the business. MI suggested asking for funding from the IWF, which AM agreed to investigate although may be difficult following the political fallout post the McLaren report.

RA reiterated the concern that a reduction in headcount may impact the ability to deliver against the current strategy and AM responded that he was confident it would not. RA noted if there was a requirement to change or develop going forward, the current team may not possess the correct or required skillsets for future developments and wanted to ensure the Executive remained wary of this. AM explained a number of roles were ring-fenced around funders requirements and targets but noted there would be a need to revisit the structure to make sure it was appropriate going forward especially if the business was to be more efficient and productive.

GT asked if any discussions had been held with other NGBs/Sport England regarding the centralisation of core service support. AM advised that whilst Sport England and UK Sport remained keen on the potential benefits of shared services, AM replied explaining any such collaboration would take some time to implement and agree and any savings needed to be implemented quicker to offer any benefit. He also added that several other NGBs were in a similar position with staffing reductions also on their agendas.

MM shared a diagram detailing the key financial risks and opportunities facing the organisation over the next 12 months. This was based on the most recent forecast (B) and reported that the biggest area of concern remained staffing, whilst there was still uncertainty around accurately forecasting revenues for courses, membership and partnership income.

Following a request from the Audit Committee and BWL's new auditors, MM presented a forecast for 2021/22 had been produced based on known grant income from Sport England which still showed a loss of £54k.

Finally, AM advised that a number of key partners (Prison Services/HE&FE) had already advised that they currently had no plans to deliver BWL courses in this financial year so there was a need to remain extremely cautious on revenues.

The Board **agreed to accept both the new forecast (B) and associated savings, as well as the 2021/22 forecast**, which could be forwarded to the auditors for further review.

8 Operational Reports

AM noted that TW had been appointed the NGB's COVID-19 Director.

Performance

Return to Training - TW presented an update on the lockdown process for both Weightlifting and Para-Powerlifting. He advised that all elite athletes were set up to train from home and advice had been shared with them including online case conferences. During this period, training programmes had been set with ways to minimise injuries and monitor athletes daily with more online coaching, mobility and planning.

There was ongoing engagement with stakeholders – Loughborough University, EIS and UK Sport and the WCP selection for the new year had been held.

Return to training planning and frameworks were in line with Government guidance and he was liaising with partners to agree appropriate conditions as well as developing various documentation /procedures that needed to be put in place and signed off before the team can return to Loughborough. Health and well-being of lifters, coaches and support staff remained the number one priority. During Phase 1 it had been decided not to return due to social distancing rules which would need to be adhered to. In Phase 2 there was a need to address further changes and further consider athlete options. It was felt weightlifting could possibly return and be of value, i.e. being able to have face to face coaching, but powerlifting was not able to return yet. Several actions still needed to be addressed, including sourcing PPE and identifying a COVID-19 Medical Officer for weightlifting.

The Board agreed to support our Return to Training and Return to Work strategies and proposed timescales, whilst AK added his support, adding it was positive that the organisation was being pro-active around this matter.

World Class Programme (WCP) for Para Powerlifting – TW noted that plans were being adjusted due to the new date for the Para Games in 2021 with a new qualification window set. There are currently three people in the top six of the rankings and the medal target remains 1-2. Individual updates on various athletes were provided. He noted all the athletes were currently fit and healthy and training from home and were making good progress. He reported that there were still 7 athletes on the Confirmation programme and 3 on the National Development Squad although it was difficult to recruit larger numbers at present.

Regarding the Phase 2 of the Paris WCP funding submission, he reported that UKS were happy overall although some development areas had been identified for further work.

Olympic Lifting and Talent Pathway Update

AM reported that the Sport England funding submission for CWG22 medal support had been made and it was hoped to hear further in July.

Regarding Tokyo 2021, there were four potential lifters with three currently in a strong position of qualifying due to their position in the rankings although Emily Muskett has work still to do due to the reduction in weight categories. The European Seniors competition is scheduled to take place in Moscow late October/early November, which sits in the refreshed Tokyo qualification period (September 2020 to April 2021). All athletes need to lift again and perform well to maintain or improve ranking positions to qualify.

Regarding the UK Sport funding application, there has been clear feedback to suggest World Class Programme support will be difficult although there is an opportunity to submit for Progression Funding for future with further details announced in July.

The Talent Pathway continued to run and due to the current situation, all work has moved to online training and support.

Looking forward to CWG 2022, a strong squad of English lifters has been initially identified with potential opportunities for a similar number of medals as achieved in 2018 or more. Squads, coaches and support teams would be announced as soon as Sport England release further information on their medal Support programme.

Sport Development and Coach Education

KL presented her report on operational performance including developments and progress relating to Workforce, Competitions, Communications, Relationship Managers and Governance matters. She also gave an update on operational changes implemented due to COVID-19 and plans being made to return to office working in future. It was noted that there had been several developments with online products for courses and competitions and an increased number of external communications implemented to maintain engagement with the membership. The annual review with the CPSU for safeguarding had gone well and the "Good" rating had been maintained. The application for the Equality Standard in Sport at Intermediate level had been submitted and an assessment date scheduled Later in June.

JF asked what impact Covid-19 had on the culture of the staff since lockdown and working from home. KL responded that she felt good communication channels had been implemented with all staff throughout this period and did not think any major issues had arisen with many staff commenting communication had improved and weekly team meetings should be continued in the future. KL also felt that the need to focus on our digital area of the business had generated a greater feeling of collaboration and team work with more individuals adapting and been asked to support in projects they would not normally be involved with.

8 Board Matters

Sport England/UK Sport Updates – AM noted that all important stakeholder updates had been covered in earlier parts of the meeting.

Complaints Log – AM noted there were very few complaints on the log and non were on-going. AK questioned one complaint focussing on a social media issue and AM confirmed that the complaint was dropped prior to investigation but it had highlighted a potential problem that all lifters and coaches needed to be aware of and BWL would ensure it reviewed and updated the contents of its education programmes to avoid any similar complaints in the future.

AM also noted that there had been three complaints following a lack of prompt engagement/communication around the #blacklivesmatters campaign which has since been followed up and a plan for greater engagement agreed.

Risk Register – The register had been updated and most of new red risks were COVID-19 related. AM reported he is working with the Audit Committee to fully update the register as the current position is remains fluid and would report back at the next meeting.

Operational Scorecard – The May document was sent out with the papers and key points were mainly covered under the operational report.

9 Any Other Business

BWL Foundation – The proposed governing document was sent out with papers and AM noted the document had been written with a close alignment to the BWL Articles and ensured compliance with the Code for Sports Governance. **The Board approved the proposed Governing document and for its submission to the Charity Commission.**

Appointment of Board Member – Following last Board evaluation and audit, it was agreed to appoint a suitable individual with legal expertise. Two names had put had been put forward by AK/KS. AM confirmed the process to appoint an individual rather than seek to openly advertise for a new Director, which may be currently challenging, was in line with both BWL's Articles of Association and with UKS's Governance team. **It was agreed the Nominations Committee (GT as Chair plus one other independent Board member) would consider both applications and recommend one individual to the board electronically.**

BWL New concept competition – A working group meeting has been held to discuss this further and a summary proposal had been circulated with the papers. Further details would follow as the concept was finalised.

IWF/McLaren Report – The full report had been circulated with the papers and a short BWL statement had subsequently been issued. AK reported the he had asked the UK Sport Governance Department for advice on how best to handle the situation. He noted how important it was that BWL had to be comfortable with individuals that represent BWL on any International Boards or Committees always behave with the highest integrity.

MI gave an overview about his role on the IWF Executive Board, which was followed by MC who explained his voluntary consultancy role. **It was agreed that an internal review should be carried out with a report shared with UK Sport.** AK noted it was important to consider how best to manage these individual relationships going forward and the role the International Relations Committee could play.

Birmingham 2022 – MC advised that Sam Coffa had been appointed as the liaison/dedicated lead to kickstart activities with CWG. MC had contacted him and requested a meeting with him and AM, regarding aims of IWF regarding the CWG in 2022.

10 Date and Venue of Next Meeting

To be agreed

The meeting closed at 3.20 pm.