

Regional Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: 7th May 2016

In attendance: Bryan Youlden (Chair)
Lenny Barry (North West)
Tim Godson (Yorkshire)
Keith and Sue Sowden (North East)
Aneel Khana (West Midlands)
Steve Jones (East Midlands)
Ron Richards (South West)
Charlie Orton (London)
Rohan West (Volleyball England)
Ian Poynton (Volleyball England)
Ruth Norfolk (Volleyball England)

Apologies: Freda Bussey

Introduction & Welcome

BY welcomed everyone to the meeting – the first in over two years and thanked everyone for making it such a good turn-out. The intention is to revitalise the commission and to improve communication from the grass roots to the centre and vice versa.

General Relationship with Regions

- Constitution & Membership
- Lines of Communication
- How Can We Reach the Players
- How to Improve Comms & Marketing of the Sport

BY circulated the purpose of the Regional Commission as detailed in the Volleyball England Framework document and invited the commission to consider whether this was still relevant. A particular challenge is the wide disparity across the country in how the Regions operate. As an example, some such as the South West have very strong area associations whereas others such as the West Midlands have few if any area associations. CO commented that main role is running volleyball rather than 1st paragraph. This view was generally accepted and the emphasis may therefore require changing slightly.

ACTION: BY

LB - 1st paragraph is still relevant but it should be the members who should be setting the direction of the sport. It should be everyone wins. London has great infrastructure, but the NW is well behind.

TG – The current organisation is top down whereas it should be bottom up

RW – If we receive Sport England Funding for specific programmes, we have no choice but to apply Sport England policies and there is often a mismatch between the priorities set by government and those of grass roots volleyball.

RR - Without resources at local level it is very difficult to deliver many of the programmes.

LB – It is often detrimental to the Regions to have courses etc. organised centrally.

The concentration of staffing into head office is an issue and as a result we don't feel involved. At present, everything is too much centrally focussed.

RW – We can't change very much without a change in Sport England policy. There is however a proposal to expand the investment zones.
ALL - This would be welcomed.

CO – Board minutes are not published so we don't know what is happening.

ACTION RW to investigate

(N.B. Subsequently advised that the minutes are completely up to date on the website)

Would it be possible to have all the minutes of the various committees, commissions, regional associations, etc. hosted in one place? The North West previously asked if the regional association could be hosted on the Volleyball England website and were told not. Could we have one portal?

RW – The current platform is ancient and can't handle that at present and the contract is not particularly helpful, but this is being looked at and is high on the agenda.

The East is a problem. They deliver volleyball very well but there is a need to try to initiate a committee/involvement. CO willing to go and visit. Volleyball England to contact them. Rachel Laybourne is the relationship manager.

ACTION BY/CO/RW

RR – It has been suggested that there is no need for Regions. Disagree. We need to concentrate on what works and find ways to resolve issues in other Regions.

LB – Volleyball doesn't have to be delivered via the Regions but it will be much better if it is. Most of the membership has no connection with Volleyball England as they operate in local leagues. Players just want to play. Need to find the methods locally to grow the sport.

There is a problem finding the volunteers to run the regions. Ian and other staff visiting clubs in the regions are very welcome but it could operate even better if the Regional chairs knew about visits.

ACTION: RW/IP

Comms and Marketing - Ruth Norfolk

We need to adopt the brand guidelines for volleyball more widely.

There is a need for everyone to share the branding. Kit and gear needs to be branded and available to us. The Volleyball England logo needs to be adopted more widely but there may be issues adding additional items and consultation is needed. There is however a great value to individual club etc. specific branding.

There should be a monthly referees and coaches newsletter.

We also want to improve internal as well as external comms.

Only 400 people read the last issue of 3 Touch for an average of 4 minutes per person! It is a massive investment for little return. We are looking into this in great detail.

LB - would you want more email addresses? Yes. Need format and will supply.

ACTION – RN/RW

Suggest that all comms are sent to Regional Chairs and Secretaries. Need to specify parameters of such communications

ACTION – RN/RW

Looking at the top end of the NVL to review how to promote themselves more widely. Views were expressed that this should not be mandatory. A conference call with the top clubs to consult over this is proposed.

A press pack for Clubs is also in preparation.

Volleyball England are working with Mizuno for a club kit deal which will be competitive.

Coach website – A deal with the The Art of Coaching Volleyball website has been tentatively agreed whereby a premium coaching licence normally costing £180 will be £12 for each user.

Referees – new kit has been developed (design shown). Tech material is planned at a subsidised rate which is due out before June.

Query – could something similar be produced for coaches?

ACTION – RW

Volleyball Voice – looking at presenting on various topics e.g. funding, Sport England new Strategy. Also optional seminars delivered by PWC e.g. club finances, club structures (CASC clubs).

Clubs are being consulted as to when and where they want them. These are planned for September/October.

Communication via Regional Associations is also planned.

It was suggested that this is issued in outline form before AGMs so it can be used to promote them.

Clubs and players like the fact that Volleyball England comes out to them.

Could possibly vary the location in the regions from year to year.

Message needs to be clear as to what it is about.

Membership & Workforce Update

- What's New
- Regional & Area Discussion Sessions
- Volleyball Voice 2016
- Funding Opportunities
- Registered Coaches & Referees by Region
- Demand for Courses Outside Investment Zones

The staff are talking to clubs, coaches etc. asking what people want.

Communication has been a problem.

More tournaments run by Volleyball England are wanted by some.

Query re course revenues not coming back to the Regions. The cost has increased but with no better service. Would be better if it came back to the regions.

There are not enough mentors. Is paying them an option? Investigate.

ACTION

We need copy of referee's strategy. It needs also to be implemented

ACTION – BY

Steve Evans to attend our meeting

ACTION - BY

Pointless qualifying people to ref and coach if they don't then use the qualifications.

With refereeing, there are issues with no contact or mentoring for new qualifiers.

Need to link with Refs Commission re improving behaviours via bans etc. Clubs and local and regional associations need to ban players (example of West Midlands cited).

ACTION - BY

Working with our web and database supplier to replicate the Rugby League system where everything is on one website and all are linked with standardised content. There are links through to Clubs and clubs stats and results. Simply putting data on the one site.

Instant publication and updating of league tables if both secretaries of the clubs involved in a fixture input a result (still checked by league officials).

KS - 100% a good idea.

AK – There may be issues at local level as various rules, number of sets etc. which could cause a problem with formatting, etc.

Lots of consultation is required.

Young players want to know where they can go so could be useful for advertising pathways. Also, if people move areas. BUCS website is a great example of how it can work and develop the sport with 7M plus hits.

Very good for comms and marketing purposes.

General positive consensus.

New Developments

It is proposed to change player etc. data into a dashboard via a log in. It is helpful to also see trends across the country, so could we have the national picture?

Some of the existing data is also inaccurate where clubs no longer exist. Also, who is actually active as distinct from just being listed as being involved in volleyball as it can paint a false picture.

We need to be able to feed back problem clubs etc. so Volleyball England can help at a much earlier stage and prevent clubs folding.

ACTION: Regions

Need to be can't play unless affiliate to Volleyball England.

Need constitutions and accounts for regional and area associations by 31 July every year to Martin Lindsey.

FUNDING

Last year £581,796 in grants was secured. Volleyball has been the fourth highest sport in securing grants.

The Sport England Small grants award scheme is still the most popular.

The 14-25 age groups has been the focus wanted but this will be changing in May 2017 so any grants that are in preparation may need to consider this and submit promptly before the (unknown) change in focus.

North Riding Eagles has been awarded £69K for beach court under Inspired Facilities scheme.

Another option could be to convert disused warehouses.

Safeguarding Update

- Legislation Changes & Impact on Sports Clubs
- Welfare Officers
- Time to Listen Courses

SAFEGUARDING

Time to Listen courses.

These are a Government and not a Volleyball England initiative. Every community club with players aged under 18 requires attendance at a course by the club's Child Welfare Officer under the guidelines. It was initially thought that they had to be volleyball specific but that is NOT the case.

There is a 3 month grace period to get qualified (then lasts 3 years). Volleyball England have to comply and are proposing to suspend clubs that don't comply. It is in club's interests to be covered. It was agreed that Volleyball England need to manage the message if this happens to explain why this is required. Letters will be issued to clubs.

ACTION Ian Poynton to liaise with Rob Payne over courses to determine where courses are required. Regions to feedback to Volleyball England if there is a requirement.

ACTION Regional associations need to publicise the information to clubs and to include on regional websites.

The one issue thereafter is whether the regional associations police it by stopping clubs from playing in the leagues. Some clubs e.g. Merseyside don't affiliate to Volleyball England.

ACTION: Review decision on the latter at the next meeting.

SJ - Asked Volleyball England to take a lead and tell us what is decided.

Volleyball Futures (Talent ID Project)

- Update on Programme
- Plan for Events
- How Can Regions Assist

VOLLEYBALL FUTURES

This is a project to get more physically talented individuals into the talent pathway.

E.g. it has been shown that against European and international standards, our players are short, lacking in strength & conditioning training, and have little sports psychology support etc.

Volleyball England is working with clubs to host talent ID events with clubs, schools and colleges who will undertake a battery of tests over the 12 to 20 age group. Those identified will then be invited to join the clubs hosting the events and then fed into the talent programme. The minimum requirement will be that they will be training 3 times a week (this will be a significant commitment for the clubs and can be spread over more than one club). A prospectus and guide book will be coming out.

ACTION: Volleyball England

Competitions Review Update

- Process & Results
- Incremental Changes
- Major Changes
- English Volleyball League Vision
- Next Steps

COMPETITIONS

The competitions review is ongoing. There have been 6 group meetings with 4 sub-groups formed (Sitting, beach, junior, adult).

All proposals are subject to separate specific consultation projects. We are seeking to learn from Rugby who failed to consult with clubs and their strategy therefore failed to be adopted requiring a major rethink.

Nothing will happen until deeper consultation with Clubs has been undertaken e.g. Super 8 teams want more games. The group suggested that this forms part of Volleyball Voice.

Key Proposals Outlines

1. Junior

The Inter-Regionals planned to relocate to Midlands where a number of new facilities are to come on line including an 8 court facility in Nottingham.

It was agreed that we need an outlet to assist young players to go to the next level. It was commented that it shouldn't be about standard, but about participation.

Need a bigger discussion about the junior competitions in the Regions. Need specific discussion about this. Need some consistency across the country and the competitions review still doesn't deal with some of the key issues.

ACTION Discuss as a group at the next Commission meeting and then nominate someone to sit on the committee sub group.

2. Senior indoor

Super 8 teams want more meaningful games. Further discussion required re the student cup mismatch between academy based universities and others. Regions need to be showcasing student volleyball more.

ACTION Discuss at next Commission meeting.

3. EVL Review

It was not possible to discuss at this initial meeting but it was agreed that it should form a key component of the next Commission meeting.

ACTION: Discuss at next Commission meeting

Current Whole Sport Plan Results

- Review of Results for 2015-16

A presentation was delivered on the output from this.

Government & Sport England Strategy

- Overview of Sporting Futures Strategy
- Sport England Strategy Update
- Implications for Volleyball England

WHOLE SPORT PLAN & STRATEGY 2024

We are in the last year of our funding regime.

We are well ahead of the outcomes required of the sport in many key areas as examples:-

Affiliated clubs target 450 actual 465.

Satellite Clubs target 80 actual 67

One area where we are behind target is Go Spike sessions with target at 225 and actual 114, but ahead on numbers in attendance.

	Actual	Target
FE sessions	42	16
HE sessions	225	250
HEVO Universities	71	65
Sitting players	268	128

Strategy 2024 outcomes

One concern is the lack of provision in primary schools
Everything else is tracking well.

There has been big growth in universities and our results are being copied by other sports.
Targets are a negotiation with Sport England going forward.

ACTION Volleyball England will supply stats and info to the Regions.

GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

Latest strategy came out in December and Sport England announces their new strategy on 17th May and then their funding guidelines two weeks later with funding decisions in December.

This Commission will be invited to contribute.

Ideas include expanding the investment zones and add the South West as a new investment zone.

Wrap Up & AOB

It was agreed that Tele conferencing is worth considering for future meetings.

2 meetings and one teleconferencing in between a year was agreed as the likely future plan.