



Oxfordshire Cross Country League

ESTABLISHED 1987

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2022 EGM Working Party Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, 18th May 2022

Time: 19:30hrs

Venue: Online Meeting

Present:-

Dan Wymer (*Sponsorship Secretary & Witney Roadrunners*)

Dene Stringfellow (*Manager*)

- Tom Gould (*Bicester AC*)
- Kelly Lehmann (*Oxford Tri*)
- Jacky Pinnock (*Eynsham RR*)
- Kit Villiers (*Headington RR*)
- Gary Warland (*Alchester RC*)

1) Apologies

Ros Kelling (*Treasurer & Banbury Harriers AC*), John McCormac (*Witney Roadrunners*).

2) Welcome

The meeting was opened by Dan with the aim of reviewing and discussing feedback that had been received to the draft Future Funding of the League proposal circulated to clubs since the last Working Party meeting and subsequent meeting of the OXL committee.

3) Oxford Tri Club Feedback Review (*Kelly Lehmann*)

Dan invited Kelly Lehmann to present the concerns outlined in the document (*included with these minutes*) in advance of the meeting for review and further discussion. Kelly acknowledged all the work that has been done by the working party and stated that he was aware how difficult it is to get a consensus on such matters.

The first concern was that most runners don't complete 4 or 5 races a season. Kelly presented figures from the past 5 completed seasons, albeit based upon adult participants only, to clearly demonstrate that point.

The percentage of those not running in the last race/fixture would be the minimum forecast by the figures in the existing proposals. Taking Oxford Tri as an example based upon the data presented in the current proposals, the figures suggest the percentage of those not running in last round would be 61% whereas the actual figure

was 93% not running. From a pool of 41 Oxford Tri runners only 3 completed all 4 races. All of the other Oxford Tri runners competed now and then.

Kelly asserted that only looking at the reduction numbers from race 1 to race 5 only covers half the story. Only 9 clubs out of 25 maintained more than 60% of their runners over the course of the season.

The feedback received from Oxford Tri club members, based upon an admittedly small response sample so far, indicated that only a third of members would be prepared to pay entry fees in advance for the season.

Ultimately, the concern was that unless occasional runners are accommodated Kelly was not convinced that the League will not raise sufficient funds to make the budgets work and cover costs due to lower than forecast entries.

Comments

- Dene stated that historically from the outset the trend of diminishing participants has always been the case as a season progresses.
- The first fixture of the season is typically always the highest attended fixture largely due to initial enthusiasm and more clement weather.
- The initial enthusiasm particularly amongst those who have not attempted cross country participants tends to dwindle as the season progresses. In addition, those runners who no longer remain in contention for prizes can also lose interest.
- Dan also pointed out the proposal attempts to address the fact that for the fixtures towards the end of the season, being less well attended, the host club(s) find it harder to break even.
- Jacky believed that most runners would be familiar with the Mota-variation Series model and would therefore not be averse to paying up front of a series of races knowing full well they may not be able to compete in them owing to injury, holidays or other unforeseen circumstances.
- £5 per race is relatively small in comparison to the fees runners are now expected to pay to enter a 5km or 10km race.
- It was conceded that the sums being discussed were relatively trivial compared to those to enter an iron-man that runs to hundreds of pounds.
- Tom asked for clarification as to whether the entry budgets were based upon 20% under the lowest turnout of runners.
- Dan stated the entry income budgets were based upon 90% of the highest turnout of runners.
- The consensus had been that it might put off some people but the majority would still be prepared to enter.

The second concern raised was that the target entry figures for the proposed budgets have only been achieved in terms of turnout at 5 of the rounds over the past 5 seasons.

The concern again was that the proposed budgets were overly optimistic in terms of the projected entries and there appeared to be a high risk that fixture costs would not be able to covered.

Comments

- Jacky felt that the impact on numbers as a result of Covid and the need to isolate needed to be borne in mind.
- In addition, the distances to some of the venues will also have been a factor in the turnout.
- It was confirmed that the total number of entries received has been approaching 2,500 in recent seasons, albeit that figure was lower for last season as a result of the pandemic.
- Tom conceded that the forecast figures are clearly a gamble that runners would be prepared enter up front even though they may not run at all of the fixtures.
- Dene was of the view that with no past data to fall back on there will inevitably be a significant risk associated with any forecast budgets for the next 3 seasons at least.
- It was also Dene's view that if the costs of the fixtures could not be guaranteed to be covered, the season should not be allowed to go ahead.
- Given its current limited financial resources the League would not be in a position to cover a season's costs, if entries were lower than forecast.
- It was confirmed that if entries were down by 40% against the forecast budget then two of the fixtures would not be able to go ahead.
- It was agreed setting higher budgets earlier would be preferable to having the budgets go up every season.
- Tom felt that it would be easier to convince clubs if the entry fees could remain fixed for 3-4 seasons.
- Gary was of the view that a cost of £1/mile for adults ought to be an easy sell as the current for road races is more £2/mile.
- Jacky raised a concern that juniors might be put off and the League needed to encourage the next generation of runners.
- Dan pointed out based upon feedback from a junior club at the EGM along with recent personal track event experience that junior sensitivity to the entry fees would be less of an issue given the £7/event for the track and field currently being paid.
- It was suggested the club affiliation could be increased to help keep the athlete entry fees down, but Dan confirmed that doubling the club affiliation fee would not generate a significant increase in income to help cover costs.
- Dene stated that club affiliation fees would have to increase massively if athlete entry fees were removed from the budgets.
- The consensus was that although the clubs would be willing to cover some of the costs they would not be prepared to cover all the costs, therefore the combined model of club affiliation fee and individual athlete entry fee would be the most acceptable approach.
- Dan confirmed that the proposals were based upon clubs collecting the money from their athletes and submitting and paying for their club's entries en block.
- The concern was raised by Jacky that getting responses from athletes can be difficult and time-consuming.
- Kit felt was not an issue at Headington RR as the club already had a system in place where it was incumbent upon the athletes to confirm their entry with the

team manager in advance. Consequently, the view was that this should not present any problems for clubs.

There followed a short interlude while the meeting was restarted, after which Dan clarified that the proposal would be reviewed and the voting options adjusted in accordance providing a greater distinction between them as agreed.

Dene indicated that the amended voting Option B for the proposal would likely not be significantly different to the alternative proposal suggestion presented at the previous Working Party meeting.

4) Proposal Refinements (*Tom Gould*)

Tom felt that the fixture costs and managing the change section of the proposal needed to provide additional clarification.

Stating the anticipated current budget including the current bank surplus would add greater clarity.

It would also help sell the proposal if the League could state that the proposed annual fees could be anticipated to remain unchanged for several seasons and be sufficient to cover the fixture costs. That would alleviate the element of uncertainty in the short term both for the clubs and athletes.

The emphasis in terms of the meeting to confirm budgets and fees reference ought to be placed on it being a review process to ensure fixture costs are being covered, rather giving an indication that the fees might possibly increase on an annual basis. That would again help provide some reassurance to both clubs and athletes.

The target bank reserves (£10,000?) the League is aiming to achieve needs to be clarified as well as in how many years that target is hoped to be achieved (*5 years, for example*).

In addition, it ought to be stated that once the target reserves have been achieved that entry fees will be adjusted downwards accordingly. That would also help emphasize the value for money clubs are getting as well as avoiding the costs being unnecessarily high in the long term.

With respect to the average venue costs referred to in relation to the budget for new venues the emphasis ought to be that the average or range of costs should be taken as a guide for acceptable venue costs for host clubs approaching new venues.

Comments

- No concerns were voiced regarding the points Tom had raised. It was agreed that all of the suggestions should be implemented.
- It was felt that removing any uncertainty, as far as possible, from the proposal would help to reassure clubs.
- Dene confirmed that the proposed meeting to confirm budgets and fees had always been intended primarily as a review rather than a carte blanche for budgetary and fee increases.
- Dan apologised for the oversight in the omission of the League's intended target of £10,000 of bank reserves and that had been agreed.

- Dene's view was the bank reserves are intended to protect the League, to ensure any unforeseen and unbudgeted for costs in future can be covered by the League and allow a League season to be completed.
- The intention is that if the bank reserves become depleted that those reserves should be reinstated as swiftly as possible without having to increase fees significantly as far as possible.
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5) Winding Up Procedure

In the event the League were to fold, Tom raised the question as to what would happen to any money left in the bank account.

Comments

- Dene confirmed that no section of the current constitution covered such an eventuality.
- It was his view that any money left in the bank account ought to be returned proportionally to the current member clubs.
- It was agreed that this omission needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

6) Liability Limitation

Tom advised that, given the sums of money that are projected to be involved, the League ought to look into options of changing the organisation's status to limit the liability of the officers of the League at any given time from the event of a catastrophic financial outcome should such occur.

Comments

- Dene was aware that the organisers of the Abingdon Marathon were currently exploring options to change organisation's status and limit the liability of the committee members.
- It was agreed that this was a matter that needs to be dealt with as a matter of urgency to protect the members of the committee.

7) Actions

It was agreed that the proposal needed to be modified provide a greater distinction between the options to be presented for voting upon at the forthcoming AGM, with the budgets for Option B to be modified upwards as discussed. **Action: OXL**

Committee

The finalised Future Funding of the League Proposal will be incorporated in the 2022 AGM documentation that will be made available along with the 2022 AGM Notice scheduled to be distributed to clubs and posted on the website as well as social media within the next week. **Action: OXL Committee**

A proposal that a section covering the eventuality of the winding up of the League needs to be incorporated into the League's constitution and added to the Proposals section of the forthcoming AGM. **Action: OXL Committee**

A proposal on how the League's status as an organisation may be to altered to protect the officers from financial liability in the event of catastrophic financial failure needs to be addressed under the Proposals section of the forthcoming AGM. **Action: OXL Committee**

8) Close

The assembly were thanked for their all their input and contribution.

The meeting closed at 20:55hrs.

Dene Stringfellow
League Manager

Oxford Tri Club – Future League Funding Proposal Concerns

Oxford Tri input to debate on OCCL Funding. 18 May 2022

If the Working Party has included a method to include those runners who only want to race once or twice per season, you can ignore Item 1 below. Item 2 may still be of some concern.

- Many Runners do not presently complete 4/5 races per year – as evidenced in the high level of dropouts from Race 1 to Race 4/5

	Adult Finishers				
	21/22	19/20	18/19	17/18	16/17
1st Meet	510	580	541	519	486
2nd Meet					
3rd Meet					
4th Meet	297			354	358
5th Meet		378	400		
Minimum % Not Running 4 / 5 races	41.8	28.6	28.3	31.8	26.3

This minimum % would be increased if Clubs have a large 'bank' of runners from which different runners attend each race:

e.g. In 21/22 the above minimum % for Oxford Tri was 61.1%. The real figure was 92.6%, as only 3 did all 4 races. We averaged 17 per race (18.24.15.11) from a total of 41 runners.

There is a risk that a large number of runners would not want to pay for a Season, knowing that they only intend to run once or twice.

It is recommended that we deliver a solution that allows occasional runners - in order to maintain the number of runners and the resulting revenue.

- Irrespective of the above, there is a risk of not achieving the Budgeted Entry Fees - which is based on income from 90% of 2021/22 Race 1 finishers (90% x 510 runners = 459 runners).

- After race 1, this number of runners has only been achieved 5 times in the past 5 years:-

	BUDGET	Adult Finishers				
	22/23	21/22	19/20	18/19	17/18	16/17
1st Meet	459	510	580	541	519	486
2nd Meet		454	478	446	356	415
3rd Meet		359	518	546	500	405
4th Meet		297	414	388	354	358
5th Meet			378	400		

In 21/22 only 10 of 25 clubs kept entry levels >60% of their Race 1 runners (for all 4 races).

If the 90% assumption were reduced to 60%, it would have the following impact on Revenue.

Seniors Only	90%	80 %	70%	60%
Runners	459	408	357	306
Option A £20	£9,180	-£1,020	-£2,040	-£3,060
Option B £25	£11,475	-£1,275	-£2,550	-£3,825

It may be prudent to build a budget with a reduced level of Revenue from Entry Fees.

The risk can be mitigated, to a degree, by delivering a solution that allows occasional runners.

All figures are arrived at by 'counting' the seasonal web-site lists for adult finishers only. They may not be perfect but, I think, they should be good indications.