

# Octopush News June 2002

Published by the British Octopush Association, the ruling body for underwater hockey in the UK

## TEEN SQUAD WINS GRANT

**BRITISH Octopush is spending hundreds of pounds to encourage youngsters to take part in international competitions.**

This year's annual meeting agreed to fund the male under-19 squad with £1 000 of members' money to support its entry into the world championships in Canada.

*The grant was made possible by careful housekeeping over the last year. This has seen the BOA's finances at their most healthy for some years.*

UK Squads manager Alun "Mitch" Mitchell says: "Everyone at the annual meeting agreed that the juniors are the seed corn of our sport.

"We recognise that every pound we give to youngsters now will be a good investment in world championship medals in the years to come."

*Junior competitions manager Chris Careless says: "I am pleased that we as an association are investing in the future. I would like to see a time where every adult club has a junior team affiliated to it."*

Other decisions taken by the meeting include:

**\*Member of the year:** Michele Kwok;

**\*Most improved club:** Batley Juniors;

**\*UK national team** administrators given two year tenure;

**\*Study** announced into UK holding world championships in Manchester.

*Details: page five.*

*Got a story to share with the  
rest of British Octopush?*

Email your text to [secretary@britishoctopush.org](mailto:secretary@britishoctopush.org)

# Congratulations to all

**UK OCTOPUSH is in great shape, thanks to the efforts of volunteer athletes and administrators who are doing so much to develop our sport.**

Soon our national teams will be at the World Championships in Canada, and we wish them every success in bringing back medals.

Our page one story explains how the association has agreed extra cash to help the under 19 team to go to Canada — and a good job, too. Youngsters are the lifeblood of our sport.

I want to make sure that money goes to the right places in our sport in the future. So thanks to all those that bought a £5 raffle ticket to help our athletes compete abroad. That fund raising effort was just one part of an important drive to turn cash into medals.

The BOA's director of coaching, Sarah Liscoe, has held a significant meeting with Senior Liberal Democrat backbencher, David Chidgey. This is an important move in raising the profile of octopush. We cannot break out of the mould of being a minority sport without greater recognition and outside resources. (Page four).

She has also agreed to represent the BOA in its relationship with BUSA, the body which represents your interests to the world federation, and makes sure the voice of the national teams are heard.

Much is also afoot on the club hockey scene, too. Putney hosted a South East regional tournament in May.

It was well attended, and, more importantly, enjoyed tremendously by those that took part.

I appeal to all clubs to host at least one regional tournament a year.

BOA competitions manager Michele Kwok is revamping the national competitions, with qualifying rounds in both southern and northern Britain. (Page three).

This is a welcome step in making octopush relevant to people throughout the UK, and so making our sport more answerable to the ordinary players who are the lifeblood of the sport.

Financially, your association is doing well, enabling us to plan for the future and divert money to where it is most needed.

The committee, too, has a mixture of new blood and experienced members.

We are hoping to rekindle interest in the regional representative structure, too.

So please contact the secretary if you are interested in becoming a rep or filling a vacant committee post.

Finally, my heartfelt thanks to Keith Dunkinson who has stood down after three years as chairman and has passed the baton of responsibility onto me.

*Keith is a man of honour who has worked long and hard to improve the lot of everyone who cares about our sport.*

The good news is that he will still play for Northampton and has offered his support to this year's committee. Thanks, Keith.

**Tim Arnold**

# Today the nationals... tomorrow the worlds?

**BY MICHELE KWOK**

**ONCE more, I'm in the hot seat as Competitions Manager.**

Thanks to everyone for supporting me in the past, and for making me the BOA member of the year. I shall try to live up to your high hopes in the future.

One thing I have really enjoyed in recent weeks is talking to all kinds of people in hockey about how we have moved the game on.

*Let me now give you my priorities:*

**\*Increased game time**

This was achieved at Nautilus with the competitions stretching over two days. The game time was twice as long as previous years. This meant that teams could give each other a good crack to determine their positions.

**\*Non-repetitive games**

A new format was adopted at the National Qualifying Rounds, where teams did not play each other more than once. Each side had at least ten games.

Initially I was hoping to reduce this to a one day competition. But I could not fit in all the games over this rather tight schedule. So two days it will remain.

**\*Qualified non-playing referees**

Neil Dixon and I realised there was a real shortage of qualified referees, so we organised five courses in just six months. There are now 60... that's right, SIXTY... newly qualified refs.

At the Nautilus, teams were asked to supply referees on the day that they were not competing. This was well received, as players could concentrate on just their games. All the matches on the three pitches were nicely synchronised.

On the whole, the competitions were well supported. For the first time, we had a ladies division at the Nautilus for the first time, and ladies semis! I hope to continue with the same format at the Nautilus this year. The event will be held at Crystal Palace in November.

For the Nationals, I plan to run Northern and Southern Qualifying Rounds. This will reduce the semis to a one-day event. Manchester Aquatic Centre will be considered as a venue once its suitability is verified.

We are hoping to be able to host the Worlds in 2004, so the National Competitions will require constant effort to maintain and improve the standards of playing and refereeing.

***This will only be possible if all our members support their officials in word and deed.***

# Sport fights for Government cash

**THE BRITISH Octopush Association has won a top-level assurance over recognition for government cash support.**

Senior Liberal Democrat backbencher, David Chidgey, has promised to press Ministers to give underwater hockey more financial help.

The Eastleigh MP made the pledge in a meeting with the BOA's Director of Coaching, Sarah Liscoe.

*She says: "This is excellent news. We know that sports administrators treat MPs' views very seriously."*

"This is just one initiative that the BOA is making to get recognition and ultimately money for our sport."

## **APPALLED**

Sarah met the MP to brief him about octopush and ask for his help to persuade the government to give practical support to a sport which Britain invented nearly 50 years ago.

"He was openly appalled that a national governing body for underwater sports (the British Sub-Aqua Club) received a sizeable amount of Government funding, supposedly for ALL underwater sports, then apparently spent the whole of this amount on recreational underwater sport without supporting any competitive sports.

"Mr Chidgey added that any competitors representing Great Britain overseas should have priority over recreational provisions for that money."

## **UPDATE**

The MP was also concerned that octopush was not recognised by Sport England, further preventing the BOA or individual clubs or members from being eligible for any other forms of Government funding or grant aid.

He promised to target the relevant ministers and ask pointed questions on our behalf. Sarah is expecting an update within weeks.

## **GRANTS**

She added: "The meeting was very constructive. It may be only the first step up the ladder to getting Sport England recognition (and sorting BSAC 'representation'), but it is a big step nevertheless.

*"Recognition for the BOA would mean that the association could make grant applications for funds to benefit internationally competing teams and to assist with a national coaching scheme!"*

Mr Chidgey is an engineer by profession who is married with three children. He was elected to Parliament for the first time in 1997.

He was born in Basingstoke.

# AGM 2002—full details

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the British Octopush Association, held on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2002 at The Lodge, Crystal Palace.**

## **Voting Teams in Attendance**

Slough; Putney; Swansea University; Dewsbury; Watford & Acton; Tarot; Reading; Northampton; Tykes; Brighton; Dunstable; Thames Valley; Southport; Leeds; Yorkshire Ladies; Southsea; Batley.

## **Apologies for Absence**

Tim Dey, Keith Hadland, Colin Deller.

## **Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as accurate and true.

## **Committee reports**

Chairman, Keith Dunkinson, reported that over the past year he has ensured that the organisation is run according to the constitution. The year saw the approval of Tony Mourad as the GB men's squad manager. The BOA has also provided new goals to Ealing and Manchester.

Vice Chairman, Tim Arnold, reported that he has worked on restarting the regional reps structure (with limited success), as well as the organisation of the youth teams.

Secretary, Liz Newton, reported that she has organised and minuted the National squads meeting, processed all National squad questionnaire responses, produced and mailed membership letters and forms, collated and logged all membership subs, set up a BOA PO Box address, and dealt with day to day queries and requests as well as maintaining a file of all official documentation.

Treasurer, Tim Dey, forwarded a copy of draft accounts prepared in respect of the year to 31 August 2001. Profits increased from £561 in 2000 to £2,122 in 2001 (mainly due to a surplus from tournaments). Assets increased from £4,041 in 2000 to £6,163 in 2001. The books and records are all up to date. In 2002 we will see reduced income from tournaments, which are being run on a non-profit basis this year. We will also incur expenses due to the provision of goals to Ealing and Manchester.

Competitions Manager, Michele Kwok, reported that the Nationals are now running in a two-day format with full-time referees. This year's competition involved 34 teams and 6 divisions. This year saw the first qualifying semi-finals for the ladies competition. Overall it has been a very successful year.

Director of Coaching, Sarah Liscoe, reported that a manual and structured coaching scheme has been developed. Sarah has also been liaising with Sport England and Sport UK regarding funding. A meeting has been arranged with the Sports Minister to further pursue this issue. Over the next year, Sarah hopes to be able to set up a website to disseminate coaching information to clubs.

Octopush News Editor, Keith Hadland, has published 2 issues of Octopush News over the past year.

Junior Competitions Manager, Chris Careless, has run three competitions so far this year in the U-21, U-18 and U-16 age groups (see attached results). The U-13 competition will be held on 11<sup>th</sup> May. All junior competitions this year have been held in Manchester Aquatic Centre, in order to minimise the average

travelling distance for teams, and to generate a presence for UWH at this superb new facility. Chris is trying out a ladder format for the larger events (U-16 and U-13) in order to achieve a fair ranking with fewer games, so that the games can be of a reasonable length. Provisional bookings at Manchester for the 2003 Championships (hopefully in the main competition pool) are:

- |    |      |                           |        |
|----|------|---------------------------|--------|
| 1. | U-21 | 4 <sup>th</sup> January   | 3-8pm  |
| 2. | U-18 | 22 <sup>nd</sup> February | 3-8pm  |
| 3. | U-16 | 29 <sup>th</sup> March    | 12-9pm |
| 4. | U-13 | 10 <sup>th</sup> May      | 12-9pm |

National Coach, Alun “Mitch” Mitchell, reported that 5 squads are going to Canada this summer. Everything is running to plan at present, and the kit is all being ordered. Information is coming in from Canada. Three pucks have been received so far.

### **Award for Most Improved Team**

Nominations for Most Improved Team were:

St Albans (proposed by Reading)

South West Ladies (proposed by Brighton)

Orkney Ladies (proposed by Northampton)

Batley Juniors (proposed by Tykes)

The winner was voted as Batley Juniors.

*Action: Sarah Liscoe to ensure that the Trophy is passed from South West Ladies to Batley Juniors.*

### **Award for Member of the Year**

Nominations for Member of the year were:

Mitch Mitchell (proposed by Swansea University)

Michele Kwok (proposed by Reading)

Chris Careless (proposed by Leeds)

Michelle Kwok was voted the winner.

### **Election of New Committee**

Chairperson: Keith Dunkinson agreed to stand again for the position, and was proposed by Reading and seconded by Slough and Batley. Keith was voted in unanimously.

Vice Chairperson: There were two candidates for this post.

Tim Arnold was proposed by Slough and seconded by Brighton.

Fiona Kirkby was proposed by Reading and seconded by Leeds.

Tim Arnold was voted into the position.

Secretary: Fiona Buttrey was proposed by Slough and seconded by Putney. Fiona was voted in unanimously.

Treasurer: Tim Day agreed to stand again for the position, and was proposed by Tykes and seconded by Slough. Tim was voted in unanimously.

Competitions Manager: Michele Kwok agreed to stand again for the post, and was proposed by Slough and seconded by Reading and Tykes. Michele was voted in unanimously.

Director of Coaching: There were two candidates for this post.

Sarah Liscoe was proposed by Brighton and seconded by Tarot.

Tony Mourad was proposed by Southport and seconded by Leeds.

Initially, the vote was tied. Keith Dunkinson proposed that both candidates could work together focusing on different roles. However, Tony decided to withdraw from the process. Consequently Sarah Liscoe was voted into the position.

Octopush News Editor: Keith Hadland was unanimously voted to remain in the position.

Junior Competitions Manager: Chris Careless agreed to stand again for the position, and was proposed by Slough, and seconded by Batley. Chris was unanimously voted into the position.

National Referee: Neil Dixon agreed to stand again for the position, and was proposed by Slough and seconded by Tarot. Neil was unanimously voted into the position.

### **Hosting European / World Championships**

Neil Dixon stated that a number of playing nations have suggested that Great Britain should host a forthcoming European or World Championships. Previously, UK pool facilities have not been suitable. However the new Commonwealth Games Complex at Manchester was now available. Neil stated that it would be nice to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the development of the game in 2004 by hosting the World Championships, perhaps hosting the Europeans in 2003 in order to fine tune arrangements.

Tony Mourad warned that we should not underestimate the time and effort required to run competitions of this size, and a team of 15-20 people would be required on the organising committee. Keith Dunkinson stated that the proposal to host European / World Championships in the UK was a good one. However detailed planning and costings would need to be in place prior to committing ourselves.

*Action: Neil Dixon to carry out a feasibility study for the project.*

### **Proposals**

*Squads Selection:* Batley proposed that coach and manager's positions should be 2 year posts, so that there is staff continuity through the European and World Championships. The vote was carried. Coach and Managers positions are now two-year posts.

*U19 Team Support:* Reading proposed that the BOA should fund the U-19 entrance fee for the Worlds to the sum of £1000. This is a one-off payment, for this year only. This was unanimously accepted.

*U19 individual support:* Slough and Brighton proposed that this support should be extended to all U-19 players in Elite squads. The vote was not carried.

### **Any other business**

*BOA Fees:* Dunstable initiated a discussion on BOA fees, feeling that the BOA are constantly struggling for funds as fees are currently too low. Reading suggested that an individual player registration scheme could be considered. Reading also highlighted the need to justify BOA expenditure, as some clubs feel that are getting very little for their money when tournament fees are payable at all BOA competitions. Reading also raised the issue that some clubs only join the BOA for insurance purposes. Chris Careless replied that without the BOA, there would be no BOA officers to organise competitions. He also stated that the benefits of individual membership would have to be carefully evaluated, as it would undoubtedly incur increased administration costs. This issue required further thought and consideration from the committee.

*Timing of Junior Competitions:* Reading requested that junior competitions should start and finish earlier in the day, so that juniors arrive home at a sensible time. Reading also requested that junior competitions should be held in around June, to give new players coming in at the start of the school year time to develop.

*Competition Results:* Dunstable raised the fact that Octopush News no longer appears to print results. The committee agreed that we should work on getting results in the next issue.

*Regional Reps:* Dunstable argued that the Regional Reps system does not appear to be in place. Tim Arnold answered that there will be further work in this area in the next year.

*TV Coverage:* Chris Careless reported that the BBC are coming to Pond's Forge to make a children's documentary film.

*Thanks:* Dave Bailey: everyone who had helped him so far with the U-19 squad. Neil Dixon: Andy Fox and Michele Kwok for their help on referees courses.

## FULL RESULTS SERVICE

# Southport, Reading, and SW Ladies share honours

**The Nautilus National League** was held over two days at Crystal Palace. It was a successful event with 34 teams entering. There were five divisions and a ladies division for the first time. The results are as follows:-

### Division 1

- 1st SOUTHPORT
- 2nd READING
- 3rd SOUTHSEA
- 4th WEST WICKHAM
- 5th SLOUGH
- 6th READING F ( Guest team)

### Division 2

- 1st DEWSBURY
- 2nd TOTNES
- 3rd EDINBURGH
- 4th NORTHAMPTON
- 5th ISLINGTON
- 6th FARNHAM & GUILDFORD

### Division 3

- 1st READING F
- 2nd BRIGHTON
- 3rd ST ALBANS
- 4th PUTNEY
- 5th SHEFFIED TYKES
- 6th BATLEY

### Division 4

- 1st WATFORD & ACTON
- 2nd BRISTOL & CHELTENHAM
- 3rd DUNSTABLE
- 4th NEWPORT
- 5th COVENTRY

### Division 5

- 1st IPSWICH
- 2nd NERO'S HEROES
- 3rd INVERNESS
- 4th TARO
- 5th PLYMOUTH UNI
- 6th SOLENT *First but unclassified (combination)*

### Ladies Division

- 1st SOUTHWEST
- 2nd WAHINE WARRIORS
- 3rd SPECTRUM ANGELS
- 4th LONDON LADIES
- 5th IPSWICH

**The National Finals** took place at Crystal Palace on 6th April, 2002. The results are as follows:-

### National Final

- 1st Reading
- 2nd Southport
- 3rd Slough
- 4th Southsea
- 5th Dewsbury & St Albans tie

### National Plate Final

- 1st West Wickham
- 2nd Leeds Beavers
- 3rd Totnes
- 4th Edinburgh & Putney tie
- 6th Islington

### National Ladies Final

- 1st Southwest Ladies
- 2nd Spectrum Angels
- 3rd Yorkshire Ladies
- 4th Wahine Warriors
- 5th Scottish Ladies
- 6th Orkney Ladies

## LATE NEWS

**Dunstable's** Tony Drakard is new results co-ordinator. Give him the results from league or friendly games in which your team participates. 01525 222457.

**East of England** regional tournament planned for Autumn. Details in the next edition of Octopush News.

**New BOA** rules to be published soon.

*Er... that's it. Ed*



