**MCBA AGM 2019 Paper 3 - Motions Received before the Meeting**

**Motion 1**

“That the entry fees for the MCBA league be increased from £35 to £40 per team and that the entry fees for the Higson Cup be increased from £15 to £20 per team. Entry for the Higson Cup and Plate would remain free for teams in Divisions 6 and 7.”

Proposer: Joy Blakey, MCBA Hon. Treasurer

Seconder: Alan Mould

Rationale:

1. The fees for entry to the League and Cup have not increased for several years.
2. The increase is quite modest, and even allowing for the increase, the lLague fees are equivalent to £1 table money per  player per match and the Higson Cup fees are equivalent to a maximum of £2.50 table money per player per match, reducing if teams get further in the competition.
3. The primary income for the county comes from League and Cup entries and P2P monies collected from the EBU. We pay several thousand pounds a year for teams to represent our county in the Tollemache, Pachabo, Corwen, President’s Cup, Northern League, County Finals, etc. Most of this we can cope with notwithstanding losses on several of our tournaments, but the Higson Cup and Plate finals lose approximately £500. By raising the League and Cup fees we should be able to break even.
4. Entry for the Goldstone Cup would remain free to all divisions and the losses pertaining to the cost of the prize money, final and entry to the Pachabo would continue to be absorbed by the county (approximately £400 in total).
5. The fee for extra players would remain at £5.
6. The fee for county affiliation would remain at £6.

**Motion 2**

"That the County forms a small working group to consider:

1. What level of reserves it is sensible for the county to hold?
2. What the excess reserves should be spent on.

Proposals to be brought to the first Council meeting after the AGM.”

Proposer: Alan Mould

Seconder: Joy Blakey.

Rationale:

1. The County has in excess of £10,000 in funds in the bank, and has had for many years.
2. An organisation such as MCBA, without any liabilities such as buildings or equipment, does not need this level of reserves. It therefore seems reasonable to determine what level of reserves are prudent and to put forward proposals as to how to spend the remainder for the benefit of MCBA members.

**Motion 3**

“That the Higson Cup and Higson Plate become a handicap event in the knockout rounds, with a sliding scale of handicap according to the following formula:

When two teams play each other, the higher division will start with a minus score of IMPs following this scale:

Division 1 - 2: 10

Division 2 - 3: 5

Division 3 - 4 : 5

Division 4 - 5 : 5

Division 5 - 6: 10

Division 6 - 7: 10

This means if a division 1 teams plays, they will start level if the opponent is another division 1 team, 10 imps down (div 2), 15 down for division 3, 20 for 4, 25 for 5, 35 for 6 and 45 for division 7.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Lower Ranking Team Division | Higher Ranking Team Division |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 2 | -10 | - | - | - | - | - |
| 3 | -15 |  -5 | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | -20 | -10 |  -5 | - | - | - |
| 5 | -25 | -15 | -10 |  -5 | - | - |
| 6 | -35 | -25 | -20 | -15 | -10 | - |
| 7 | -45 | -35 | -30 | -25 | -20 | -10 |

In addition:

* The Plate will operate on the same scale, and as before it won’t be open to Division 1 and 2 teams.
* Entry into the Plate will occur if lower division teams lose their first match or win their first match and lose their second, in keeping with many other national competitions.
* The Higson Cup will be 3 rounds of knock out followed by an all play all final. Matches in round 1 and 2 will be 24 boards (or 32 if both captains wish to play more), and round 3 will be 32 boards (or 24 if both captains agree). In the Higson Plate all matches will be 24 boards (or 32 if both captains wish to play more) leading to an all play all final. Handicaps will be adjusted pro-rata for 32 board matches.
* The Cup and Plate finals will not be handicapped.
* The draw will be open with no teams seeded.”

Proposer: Adam Wiseberg

Seconder: Michael Byrne

Rationale

1. The Higson Cup is Manchester’s oldest competition, having been run since 1938. Originally titled the Infirmary Cup it was renamed in 2001. However, entries have been declining rapidly in recent years, now with 40-50 teams playing it has less than half the entrants that it did in the early 2000s, similar to the league, but not the same. [At the moment MCBA runs two knock out competitions. The other is the Goldstone Trophy which attracts 18-20 teams and is run on a straight knock out basis, with 4 teams seeded apart. This is a qualifier for a national final and is designed to make sure the two strongest teams play each other in the final. This method works well, as the two teams seeded 1 and 2 have met in every final since 2012, except for this year where the 4th seed beat the 2nd seed]
2. With more and more bridge available the gap between the top divisions and the lower division is growing wider, and the prospect of giant killing occurs rarely. In the last 16 years only 7 teams have shared the trophy, (2 of those teams no longer exist). Each year the final is between a core of Division 1 teams along with those Division 2 teams that have avoided the big names in the draw. (Very rarely do any division 3 or lower teams ever make it to the final.)
3. Many of the lower division teams only enter to gain access to the Plate competition and concede early matches which they know they will lose.
4. Matches in the knock out rounds are normally not close and there are a lot of walkovers.
5. On occasion some teams reach the Higson Cup final without playing a match, and often some teams only have to play one match.

This proposal is therefore designed to add interest and restore this historic competition to its former glory, and that a fun competitive element is returned to Manchester’s premier knockout event. The aim of this handicapping is to try and make this competition more competitive and allow any team on their day to beat any other team regardless of status or division. Hopefully the final will see a new mix of teams in it and allow new players to win the Higson Cup. It will also mean that the matches themselves have more significance and more interest; even when the higher division team wins, they will have had to earn it and work for their victory. The lower division teams will go into the matches knowing that they will have a chance of winning no matter what their opponents do. A free draw will also pit some Division one teams against each other in early rounds, meaning that the final is not made up of the same teams every year.