

Report back Club Visits

During the period from 9 Nov 2010 to 9 Dec 2010 the SC Executive represented by Trevor Davis, Christine Lombaard, Les Johnston and Johan Havenga visited 19 of the 20 SC Bowling Clubs. Only Ladismith could not be fitted into the schedule and will be visited as soon as possible. Our total distance traveled in the process was **4039 km**.

At the outset may I thank Christine, Johan, and Les for their time and effort and the long hours put into making this work. It would not have happened if it was not for the accommodating clubs, and we thank you for your hospitality and accommodating us. To Lise for accommodating us the night we stayed over on the farm to allow us to get to all the clubs in the Beaufort region. To our family members that we left at home while we were on the road, THANK YOU.

To begin with the reaction on arrival at every club was different with club executives expecting the worst; well these fears were soon laid to rest with the informal manner in which we set about "creating stepping stones" for all perceived problems. The most classical reaction from a club was an opening reaction of "when were you BOWLS SOUTHERN CAPE HERE LAST" to a closing statement of "you have not answered my question "When were you Bowls SC here last", Fellow Administrators and Presidents does it matter when the SC Executive last visited your club, what was important is that we had taken the time to get to each club and we thank you all for your hospitality.

Meetings were held informally with the emphasis on communication and transparency. There was no formal agenda and the list of topics discussed, grew longer as clubs added suggestions and questions. There are also no minutes of any of the meetings just notes made for ourselves as agreed with all clubs. The first meetings lasted about two hours each and the longest meeting at Knysna more than 5 hours as we had gone over our allotted time and had to cancel Leisure Isle for another day so we spent the time at Knysna and on leaving Knysna we visited Leisure Isle on an impromptu visit to schedule another day .

The program followed was roughly as follows:

After opening the meeting problems were called for first and listed some of the most common perceived problems opted by most clubs were.

1. **Problems as listed by clubs:** were in most cases common to all clubs and in no order of importance.

- a) Traveling
- b) Drought/Flooding
- c) Business leagues---- and that not many members have been gained through the B/league
- d) Need for new members
- e) Being on the end of the District
- f) Communication
- g) Sunday play
- h) Average age of club members
- i) Clubs don't support each other on open days, not even our neighbours.
- j) Liquor License
- k) White clothing---- dress codes

- l) Sponsors
- m) Calendar year and financial year end.
- n) Zone representatives
- o) Masters/ Presidents tournament

2. **Structure of club:** Members, Committee, Standing Committees (continuity is an important factor), Constitution (to be sent to SC), Membership application forms (to be standardized to include a declaration of playing experience), Contact details (2 persons and e- mail addresses). For effective communication clubs were requested to acknowledge receipt of e-mails.
3. **Transparency:** Clubs were requested to send minutes of their meetings to SC and place BSC minutes on notice boards.
4. **Liquor Licenses:** All clubs were made aware of outdated licenses and given booklets with information how to update. Heidelberg Club already lost their license.
5. **Leases of clubs:** Most clubs lease from municipalities with expiry dates varying from 2012 (Sedgefield) to 2025 (Groot Brak) Two clubs own the property: Beaufort West and Still Bay.
6. **Finances:** The information from the treasurer on payment on invoice (also direct payments) was handed over. The importance of information on the database was stressed.
7. **Business Leagues and unaffiliated players:** Clubs were made aware of the penalties involved and that they have to apply for permission from BSC to avoid this.
8. The suggestion from King Fisher District regarding discounted **affiliation fees of senior players** was discussed at length and seen as too extreme. Players partaking in competitions should pay full affiliation. Social players over 80/85 should have some reduction in fees from BSA, BSC and Clubs.
9. Clubs were encouraged to bring the **TV coverage** of the Namibian Test Series to everybody's attention as viewer numbers will determine future sponsors.
10. **Johan Havenga** dealt in detail regarding Bowls Awareness Day, Bowls at schools levels, and the aim to improve membership with 7% which means every club has to gain 4 members each year. The importance of member retention was also stressed. More relaxed social play with different formats of Tabs in and informal dress will ensure that the game not become boring and will also attract new players.
11. **Les Johnston** explained how SC competition draws are done, the problems with availability of greens, the 2011 league and the new score sheet.
12. **Suggestions received from clubs:**
 - a. BSC Prize giving to be held at each club with representatives from BSC attending and handing out the prizes. A pennant in place of certificates or badges was proposed. (12 clubs)
 - b. Presidents Invitation Tournament: To change to two sections: a) The 6 best players not playing in the Masters and b) A Senior Presidents Tournament for 6 best players over 60 not playing in the Masters. Play will be a round robin of 5 matches and the winners in both tournaments will have an entry into the next year's Masters. (14 Clubs)
 - c. A Junior Masters Tournament for U25 players to be played at a different time and venue. Clubs will be invited to tender to host the tournament. (14 Clubs)

- d. Champion of champions: To scrap the plate and only have the club champions play (7 Clubs)
- e. To change the playing year to a calendar year in line with BSA and move the financial yearend to a later date to be able to pay affiliation to BSA in January. (11 Clubs)
- f. To disband the Zone Rep system and have Club presidents attend the Exco meetings, at least 3 times a year. This should be tested before changing the constitution. (14 Clubs)

At the end of meetings most of the clubs' problems were dealt with. Appreciation was received from all club delegates and the meetings were ended in a very positive atmosphere. Although this was a strenuous exercise for all involved the results will surely be visible for a long time.

Conclusion

1. The Beaufort region should form its own Sub-District that they can handle the problems of distance within. All competitions will be played locally and only the winners coming through to the playoff rounds, thus giving the opportunity of more players playing in their local competitions and the winners traveling together to save costs. Winner will come through to the play offs in a ratio of number of entries as compared to the rest of the entries. A draft constitution will be given to Lise for consideration. On this note I would like to compliment Lise for what she has done to ensure growth and especially growth of the younger players in the area. As this forming of a Sub-District is a long process and a Constitutional issue which involves a constitution change may I recommend that this be started on a trial basis this year that at least the competitions be played out in that zone and that only the winners go forward to the payoffs in the George area and that we accept in principal the proposal of the Karoo Sub- District.
2. The posts of Zone reps should be done away with and more direct communication and meetings with the Club President should be encouraged.
3. The two competition secretaries who are an integral part of the inner working of any District and its smooth running of the competitions should become part of the EXECUTIVE.
4. President's invitation be changed to include the senior bowlers.
5. Prize giving to be done away with due to distances and a member of the BSC Executive to attend all clubs prize giving to hand over trophies to district winners in that club.
6. Playing year to be changed to coincide with Bowls SA
7. Financial year of BSC to be investigated further as there are mixed feelings and understandings.
8. Junior (U25) singles tournament to be introduced to give these players exposure.
9. The plate competition of the Champion of Champions to be investigated further due to mixed emotions.

My personal views for the road ahead is one of mixed emotions but looking around here today it's a wonderful start for the "road ahead". However we have to change our attitude, as when a prominent business man can look you in the face and says "you bowlers want everything for nothing" we have a lot of work to do to give our game the credibility it deserves.

TREVOR DAVIS

Vice President and Chair person for the “Road show”