



Hi to all AusBGF Members and supporters

I wanted to update you on several recent developments at AusBGF.

Committee

Firstly, several members of the Committee have stepped down from their roles - Ian Dunstan and Taeed Athari - I have privately thanked them for their contributions and now do so publicly - Ian being Secretary, this created a casual vacancy.

After a call for nominations, I am pleased to advise that we have appointed Breck McCormack to be Secretary. Breck was born in the United States and first learned backgammon from his grandfather. He lived in London for 3 years and spent 15 years in Hong Kong where he was the Managing Director of the sports marketing firm IMG. He now lives in Sydney and is very happy to call Australia home.

We have decided not to fill Taeed's position at the moment as we already have the number of Committee members required by our Constitution.

Sub-Committees

We have decided to institute a system of subcommittees to progress individual issues - the idea is that the subcommittee can draft members who are not Committee members but who have relevant skills and are able to contribute and report back. The first of these subcommittees is already up and running - Education, with Melinda Kelf, Mick Dyett and Sharn Dyett. Other subcommittees contemplated are Rules, Tournaments, Marketing etc.

Rules

We have now adopted a set of Rules - these are an adaption of the UK/EU rules but differ in several areas - based on the notion that a players' turn is only completed when they either pick up their dice or activate their opponent's clock, premature dice rolls or cube action are invalid - the aim is to give tournament directors the ability to make rulings on what is otherwise unsporting behaviour.

International Affairs

AusBGF has recently joined the World Backgammon Federation (WBGf) - several of us recently had a teleconference with the General Secretary of WBGf (Ola Serhan) and we were excited by many of the things that the WBGf has to offer - for instance, they are developing education modules specifically aimed at younger players and more social players. We will also be able to participate in the World Backgammon Teams event and I believe that we can put up a formidable team.

Upcoming Tournaments

We have several events that are coming up - the signature Eva Bitel Trophy will be held from mid-July - as for last year this will be open to all members - you will have the choice of two pools - an open pool will cater for those that want to play for a substantial prize and trophy OR an Intermediate tournament where you will be playing only for the honour of winning a trophy - the Intermediate tournament will only be available to players that are recently new to backgammon and have low experience points in the National Ratings - Club directors will be consulted about whether a player fits the profile for the intermediate tournament.

Secondly, we are in discussions with our New Zealand cousins over holding the Australian-NZ event again this year - the 32 players for the Australian team will be comprised as follows: the top 16 Australian resident members in the National Ratings that have over 400 experience points will automatically qualify for the team if they are able to play; the remainder of the team will be balloted from members with a rating of over 1500 and over 400 experience points. Please note that if your name is not bolded in the National Ratings table (<https://results.ausbgf.org.au/ratings>) then you are not a member and therefore NOT ELIGIBLE - if you join before the team is chosen then you will be eligible (and your membership will be valid to 30 June 2022).

As always, keep your eyes on our website where we have a full calendar of upcoming events, including the Australian Open in mid-August (<https://ausbgf.org.au/events/2021-australian-open/>).

Memberships

The Committee has agreed that Clubs are no longer required to be members - the concept of Clubs is still important in the National Ratings scheme however. We have reluctantly decided that individual membership fees will increase from \$10 to \$15 to cover the costs of joining WBGF and the loss of Club memberships. I hope you agree that \$15 is still a reasonable fee for membership. Our Treasurer, John Symon will be sending out reminders to members shortly.

That's all for now - happy rolling to all of you!

Dr Greg Ash
President, AusBGF