

**Great British Powerlifting Federation – North West Division
Annual General Meeting held on 28/03/15**

Present: Bryn Evans
Joe Bullock
Peter Ratcliffe
Neil Ronaldson
Avril Hughes
Rick Booth
Jo Whiteley
Dave Clifford
Shannon Clifford
Christian Whittaker
Rachel Gregory

Apologies: Jim Blanchflower

1 Chairman's Report

The Secretary opened the meeting by reading the Chairman's Report (below) as the Chairman, unfortunately, could not attend:

Thank you all for coming today, I'm really sorry I'm unable to make it this year due difficult family health circumstances.

2014 has really seen powerlifting blossom both nationally and within the North West, for the first time I can ever recall we had to expand the NW divisional championships to a 2 day event. It really feels like powerlifting is entering a golden era with all these new lifters coming into the sport but this does bring with it some challenges in terms of accommodating the extra people and having enough volunteers to have the events run smoothly and safely.

I'd like to thank Bryn for his tireless effort in putting on these contests and more recently Jo Whiteley for stepping in to organise the records, taking entries and setting up the new website.

Please make good use of today's meeting, feel free to contribute to constructive debate and most of all get involved in shaping the future of our sport.

Jim Blanchflower
NW Chairman.

2 Financial Report

The Secretary presented the Financial Report up to the end of 2014 (attached). It was agreed to reimburse the Secretary for out-of-pocket expenses relating to the hire of competition venue. The NW account currently shows a balance of approximately £3,000 and, due to increased attendance at events and also Tshirt sales, revenue has increased significantly in the last year.

3 Election of Officers

It was suggested that the current incumbents be re-elected and this was unanimously upheld as follows:

Chairman – Jim Blanchflower
Secretary – Bryn Evans
Treasurer – Aaron Lohan
Technical Officer – Joe Bullock
Records Registrar – Jo Whiteley

A request was made for a Merchandise Officer but no offer was forthcoming so this role remains vacant.

4 Strategic Plan

The Secretary presented his strategic plan for the division and a number of key points were discussed:

- a) Historic lack of volunteers to spot, load and help set up and take down at competitions. Incentives for volunteers were discussed, including priority entry to North West competitions and free T-shirts. For the upcoming Lancs & Cheshire Classic competition, an unprecedented number of volunteers have come forward. This was held as a great improvement but there was some doubt as to whether sufficient help would actually be forthcoming on the day. It was decided to suspend judgement on this until after the Lancs & Cheshire and meet again 2 weeks after the competition to review whether indeed there was sufficient assistance and use the learnings from this competition to plan future events.
- b) Powerlifting clubs. There was some discussion around the issue of powerlifting clubs and the general consensus was that the formation of clubs was crucial to the development of the sport. The North West division currently has few clubs and does not offer an affiliation scheme. The Secretary agreed to write a document explaining the benefit of forming a club and to provide a template for aspiring clubs, both of which would be promoted via the website and facebook group. The Secretary also agreed to create an affiliation scheme, to be presented at a future meeting.
- c) Venue. This was discussed at length. There are many factors which support holding competitions at Intershape Gym in Colne, including price, storage of equipment, generous free car parking, strong relationship with management. However, there is limited space for spectators and some feel that it is a long way to travel. It was agreed to examine the possibility of holding small regional or novice competitions at a new venue, should a suitable one be found and a number of ideas and opportunities will be examined in the coming months.

- 5 The issue of not being able to accommodate all North West lifters at events was discussed. The idea of a novice competition was put forward as well as regional competitions based on county. There were strong reservations regarding putting on any extra competitions due to the historic lack of volunteers.

A suggestion was made to alter the method of entry and that, for the two main competitions of the year (Lancs & Cheshire in May and NW Open in November), there be a staggered entry protocol. 10 weeks before the competition, entry would open to anyone who did not lift at the previous event and anyone who had provided significant assistance at a previous event (spotting/loading/table work/set up etc). This would ensure that all NW lifters were able to lift at at least one of the main events of the year and it would also provide incentive/reward for volunteers. 8 weeks before the competition, entry would be opened up to any NW lifter, 4 weeks before the competition, entry would be opened up to guests if there were any places left and entry would close 2 weeks before the competition date. Entry will be entirely online for future competitions and this will provide a time-stamped entry which will be useful in determining entry on a "first come first served" basis. This idea was upheld and will be implemented at the NW Open in November.

It was also agreed that we should accept that these two competitions are going to be 2 day events in future and plan them accordingly as it inconveniences lifters to change the days around at short notice. There were discussions around how to streamline the event to accommodate as many lifters as possible and it was agreed that a good platform team is key. A number of these ideas will be incorporated into the platform at the Lancs & Cheshire (loading charts, rack height sheets etc) and, from this event, we should be able to gauge where to cap entry for future events.

6 2016 Calendar

The recent Team Competition was discussed and was agreed to have been a successful and popular event. It was agreed to keep the calendar the same for the following year, namely:

Team competition – early March
Lancs & Cheshire Classic – early May
Roses Cup – early August
Bench Press Champs – mid September
NW Open – end November

It was suggested that the AGM be moved to Autumn to enable future year planning and proposals to be put forward to the EPA AGM. It was agreed to hold future AGMs after the Bench Press Champs in September. This was upheld unanimously. Therefore there will be a General Meeting this year after the bench press competition and the AGM will be held at this time in future years. It was also agreed to run a referee's course annually early in the year, as long as there was sufficient interest.

7 Drug Testing

This issue was discussed and a concern was raised that many divisions now do drug testing at regional events and it would not be beneficial to be one of the few that did not. However, these are expensive (approx. £500 per test) and it was felt that the finances could not support drug testing at the moment. However, it was brought up that there was a motion before the GBPF AGM to require drug testing at divisional events and for the GBPF to appoint a Doping Control Officer to work with the divisions. It was agreed to wait to hear what was decided.

8 Merchandise

Although a Merchandise Officer has not yet been found, it was agreed that the sale of competition T-shirts at events was both a good source of revenue and an enhancement of the competition experience. It was agreed to do a competition T-shirt twice a year (Lancs & Cheshire Classic & NW Open) and also a generic North West division T-shirt which would be available all year round.

It was suggested that we add the option for T-shirts and hoodies to the entry form to be sure of satisfying demand, getting the right sizes and not being left with a surplus. This was agreed to be a good idea. It was also agreed to give competition T-shirts to platform crew.

9 Equipment Purchases

As there was a small surplus in the bank accounts, the issue of equipment purchase was discussed. However, it was agreed not to acquire any new equipment at the moment: it may be possible to support a new club or venue that wishes to put on competitions at some point in the future rather than purchasing equipment now which would merely be stored for the majority of the time.

However, it was agreed to source a banner / backdrop for competitions and develop a logo / brand for the NW and this will be developed over the course of the summer.

9 AOB

A question was raised regarding the fact that there are now no vegan belts on the IPF approved list. After discussion, the point was noted but it was felt that this wasn't a matter that could be affected by the Exec although concerns regarding the branding rules were discussed at the GBPF AGM and we look forward to hearing the outcome of this discussion.

A proposal was made that the division fund referees courses in order to bring more NW referees online and this was unanimously accepted.

With no other business forthcoming, the Secretary thanked all in attendance and closed the meeting at 5pm.