

The Irish Pétanque Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2012

REPORT OF THE HONORARY SECRETARY

1. GENERAL SUMMARY

1.1 The year 2011 was encouraging, from the perspective that some new faces came into the Petanque scene and our main Clubs reported stability or increase in membership, however, our National competitions were not as well supported as in recent years and the National team fared very poorly in the Celtic Challenge, finishing in last place.

2. MEMBERSHIP

2.1 There has been a small decrease in membership, however, some new names were added this year. Encouragingly, their heads don't all fall into the category of 'grey area' which can be applied to most of our membership. I leave it to the Hon. Treasurer to confirm the details.

3. IPA COMPETITIONS

Support for our 3 Annual competitions was patchy this year.

3.1 (a) Seven teams contested the Annual Doubles competition held, as scheduled, on 26 March 2011 at North Down's premises. In a reversal of the previous year's final, including the actual scoreline, the competition was won by Richard Elvin and Pierre di Pizzo who defeated Humberto Tavares and George Davidson 15-9 in the final.

3.1 (b) Disappointingly, in comparison to 2010, only four teams contested the Annual Triples competition which took place, as scheduled, on 16 April 2011 in Bushy Park, Dublin. Pierre di Pizzo, Humberto Tavares and George Davidson successfully defended their title, defeating Jim Ryan, Martin Ryan and John O'Grady 15-13 in the final.

3.1 (c) The Annual Singles held in Cork attracted 12 competitors. Jack di Pizzo defeated Junette Bostrom 15-13 in the final.

4. THE CELTIC CHALLENGE

4.1 The 2011 Celtic Challenge was held on 30 April/1 May at Troon, Scotland. In fine weather over the 2 days of the competition, Scotland A took the honours, halting Wales' run of 3 wins in a row. The Scottish triple of Robbie Stranoch, Paul Brettoneux and Johnnie Wilson won all 12 of their games.

4.2 None of the Irish teams played well and we finished in last place. Pointing was a general problem for Ireland on a flat, fast terrain. While there was some improvement in performance on Day 2, the damage was already done on Day 1, when only 8 wins were recorded out of 24 games.

4.3 Ireland will host the 2012 Celtic Challenge at North Down's premises. There was significant interest in our qualifying competition held on 10 September 2011 in Bushy Park, Dublin, when 10 triples teams contested the 8 places available on Ireland A and B. It was good to welcome back members of the extended Breteche family to the competitive arena.

4.4 There was much debate beforehand about a format for the competition and, eventually, a mix of 'Swiss' system and Round Robin was used. It's clear that the format did not find favour with all the competitors and that, for the future, if it's possible, when a relatively large number of teams is involved, the IPA Council must find a format which all competitors can accept as fair.

5. EUROPEAN/WORLD COMPETITION

5.1 The 2011 Confederation Europeene de Petanque competition was held in Sweden and congratulations are due to the Irish team comprising Pierre Di Pizzo, Jack Di Pizzo and Richard Elvin who secured a position sufficient to provide a place for the Ireland team in this year's World C'ships in Marseilles. Congratulations are also due to Jack Di Pizzo who performed outstandingly in the shooting competition.

6. CLUBS

6.1 North Down club has enjoyed another successful year. The club is financially sound and membership is steady around the 30 mark. A full programme of well-supported competitions will be completed. The Club hosted the IPA Annual Doubles competition in March 2011 and the Club is looking forward to hosting the IPA Annual Triples competition and the 2012 Celtic Challenge in April and May respectively. The Club will have 7 representatives on the Celtic Challenge team.

6.2 The Park PC in Dublin continues to thrive. While a number of members have gone, new players have been attracted. The Club enjoyed notable success in the IPA Annual Singles, Doubles and Triples competitions, and 10 members, including several new members, will participate in the forthcoming Celtic Challenge. Its best achievement, however, was reserved for the 2011 European C'ships in Sweden where members qualified Ireland for the 2012 World C'ships. Junior players have been added to the membership which provides some encouragement for the future.

6.3 Frankfield PC has had a stable, if uneventful year. Mabel O'Keeffe took over from Sue Ryan as chairperson, membership is fairly static, however, the installation of limited floodlighting allows for play later in the winter. The number entering the August Boule Blitz was a little down on previous years, but the Club hosted the Irish Annual Singles competition, and the end of year turkey competition was well attended. The Club will have 4 representatives on the Celtic Challenge team. The inter-club competitions with Park PC were 'parked' for the year.

6.4 As in previous years, despite continuing to correspond regularly via email with representatives of Petanque in Cahir, Sligo, Cabinteely, Galway and Wexford, information to your Hon.Sec from those quarters is non-existent or very limited.

7. COUNCIL

The full IPA Council did not meet this year. Any business required has been adequately conducted via email.

8. CONCLUSION

Despite our poor showing in the 2011 Celtic Challenge, there is some cause for optimism this year in that, the Club situations are relatively stable or improving, the number of entries for Annual competitions should rise given the new membership, particularly in Park PC, and the Celtic Challenge is on home territory.

