



Chairman's Report: Sandra Deaton

I am writing this report as we move towards the close of 2020. I am sure we will unanimously agree it has been an incredibly challenging year for the sport which has resulted in some difficult decisions and unprecedented means of communications and deliberations. The lifting of some lockdown restrictions earlier in the Autumn gave us the opportunity to move forward to some levels of normality for the sport with our clubs, leagues and training camps albeit in a COVID-19 criteria environment.

However, this was short lived and once again we needed to adapt to the lockdown restrictions. SLT quickly moved to alternative program options for the membership. As we moved into the tier system which will stay in place over the next few months, we will be presented with greater challenges for our sport as a unified approach needs significant adaptations within different local authority requirements.

I was on a Sport England Chairman's network call recently and the message was clear that their influence was very much centred around local authority. Gyms were allowed to open and some of our clubs have been able to resume participation within different age categories. However, the local league competition continues to be a challenge for the membership and unfortunately there is little hope of this improving until we head towards the summer months.

In the Sport England meeting there was also an update on their strategy to be announced in January 2021. It was very clear to see that the relationship between Sport England and the NGB remains a priority, as moving forward they will work closely with the CEO of the relevant governing bodies. Their financial support over the next year will be centred around recovery, leading into strategic social impact concepts and looking at what has been learnt over this difficult time and how we can reinvent aspects of the sport for a greater reach.

I would like to once again thank Sara and the team for their response to the COVID-19 issue and the effect on the delivery and development of the sport. They have consistently dealt with consequences of the financial restraints, the effect on competitions, the talent program, and the communication to help and support our clubs, leagues and the coaching network.

The desire of the events department to introduce some form of national competition needs to be applauded but the extended COVID-19 restriction over the next few months has meant that National events will not be a consideration until later in the year. However, it is the aim of the Board and Executive to start the competition review consultation process in early 2021.

The global COVID-19 situation continues to affect all competitions at both ITTF and ETTU level. Since my appointment to the Executive Board of the ETTU there has been significant consideration of how the European Union can reintroduce events in a COVID-19 secure environment. European table tennis is unique with the inter club competitions and there has been a very successful male and female Champions League competition played in a bubble structure in a single allocated venue. Logistically this is very difficult to organise and would not be happening without the support of significant sponsorship.



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Both our men and women's teams are registered to play in the European team qualification competition to try to secure a place in the 2022 World Team Championships. The ETTU once again need to consider these matches being played in a bubble situation, with all the teams within the groups playing in a round robin format in an identified venue.

I attended the ITTF virtual Board of Directors meeting on November 19th. The update on the team World Championships in Korea scheduled for the end of February clearly showed the need to consider an alternative format with the consideration of only 16 or 32 teams attending. It was shown that despite this restrictive number every continent will have a representative team. The BOD agreed to leave the decision of the details to the EC supported by the influence of the continental presidents. It is important for Europe generally and especially for our teams that a larger number is agreed.

[Note - Since writing the above section I have however heard that unfortunately the ITTF and the Busan Organising Committee have had no choice but to cancel the team World Championships although both sides are exploring Busan hosting a World event towards the end of 2021. The hosting of the 2021 individual World Championships In Houston remains uncertain.]

As I write this report, we have been notified that British Table Tennis has been awarded £1.35 million to progress our elite athletes within the Olympic program. This award is to Table Tennis England to administer on behalf of British Table Tennis and shows the confidence UKSP have in our leadership. Congratulations and sincere thanks must be expressed to Simon, Sara, the performance team and all the Home Nations executives and coaches for bringing table tennis back into the GB program.

We can be sure that the first half of the new year will once again bring uncertainties and disruption. I am very disappointed we find it necessary to call an EGM in January, and I hope that once this has passed the Board and Executive can return to their previously experienced harmonious, positive and respected approach to deliver and develop all aspects of our sport to every one of our Table Tennis family.

Thank you again for all your time and consideration and continual support.

Wishing you a Happy Christmas and a safe and healthy New Year.

Sandra



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