

Australian Eight-Ball Federation

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35th Australian Eight Ball Championships Post Nationals Report 17-28 October 2018

15th November 2018

Dear State/Territory Delegates, Life Members, Sponsors and all AEBF Members,

The 35th Australian National Eight Ball Championships were held in Albury in October 2018. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the rest of the Australian Eight Ball Federation Executive Committee for all their hard work in hosting the Championships independently for the first time. I am providing this report on behalf of the AEBF Executive on the preparation and running of the 2018 Championships. This report outlines preparations, challenges, outcomes and feedback regarding the 35th Australian Eight Ball Championships.

11 months prior to the Championships at the 2017 AGM in Canberra, the AEBF Executive had a change of committee, and Melissa Crawley and I joined the team in the roles of Treasurer and of Vice President respectively.

Unfortunately the first 5 months of this new term were consumed with other more urgent matters that required the Executive's full focus, and the planning of the 2018 Australian Championships was put on hold until these pressing matters were dealt with and finalized.

It is important for the reader to take into account the logistics of the AEBF Executive hosting a National Titles. One Executive meeting was held in Melbourne at the Gladstone Park Hotel in late July, otherwise all communication was through email, Facebook and via phone. At times this proved challenging, and considering a Host State/Territory Committee might meet on average up to 6 times when preparing for an event of this magnitude, I feel we did very well under the circumstances.

The Venue and Floor Plan

For the first year of our 3 year hosting contract at the Commercial Club in Albury, our initial task was to settle on the most appropriate room of the 3 large function rooms the Commercial Club have to offer. We chose the downstairs Elizabeth rooms A & B due to recommendations from General Manager Jeff Duck and after discussions and feedback from Pool Victoria and John Russell, who used this room when hosting the Labour Day weekend Albury Open this year.

Doug Percy and I visited the Commercial Club on separate occasions prior to the Championships and mapped out the room, took videos, photos and measurements, and reported back to the Committee. Greg Dingle was amazing in providing several different floor plans, successfully navigating the obstructing pillars in the middle of the room and allowing enough space around the tables for teams and spectators.

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As a player during these Championships, I was privy to the unique view of having been involved in the planning and logistics of the event as well as actually competing. Although the separate AEBF Admin and Umpires desks was not ideal, I believe the floor plan worked well enough given what we had to work with. The spacing between tables was adequate in most areas, although some competitors may agree that on a couple of tables the time outs requested and granted would be in excess of what would be considered reasonable.

The playing conditions varied, with the far end of the room often being quite cold, and the area closer to the bar much warmer.

Although we feel collectively that the 2018 Nationals was a great success and the playing room was adequate, we have requested and it has been confirmed that we will be hosting the 2019 Championships upstairs in the Stanley room (where presentation night was held).

Over-all, the Commercial Club from a personal and professional perspective is the best Venue I have ever competed at or visited from a Spectators point of view. The Management and staff bent over backwards to accommodate all of the Committee and participants various needs and nothing was too much trouble for them.

Special thanks to Managers Brett and Michael, and all the friendly and professional staff who worked in the Elizabeth room during the Nationals.

The Tables and Maintenance

The purchasing of tables for the Championships presented some unique challenges this year. Having new people on the Committee with varying skillsets and ideas, we have been striving for a more professional and efficient structure to our processes, and set about to lock our Major Sponsor CL&S and Table Manufacturer – once known, into written contracts mid-way through the year.

Having done this earlier on with the Commercial Club Sponsorship contract and being aware of the time constraints and financial aspects, our President Doug Percy met with Ray Atwell from CL&S in August and came back to us with all the details of the new written CL&S Sponsorship agreement.

The major details to note is the clause that all pool tables for AEBF sanctioned events hosted by the AEBF or one of its State/Territory affiliates needs to be purchased through a CL&S approved supplier, and all pre-existing pool tables to be re-clothed using Strachan 6811 Eight Ball cloth, purchased from CL&S. We currently have a list of 5 approved suppliers and this list can be added to in the future.

Once we had the agreement in writing we were able to put the table purchase/hire out to tender, and received 3 quotes back. This was high on our list of priorities, and proved a difficult decision to make in the end as there were many factors to consider. We were not just purchasing/ hiring 16 tables for

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a one off event, therefore re-selling, re-purchasing and storing these tables were all large factors that were taken into account when making our decision.

Ultimately we reached a unanimous agreement that purchasing the 16 tables from All Star Pool Tables and utilizing the storage facilities at the Commercial Club was our best option. After a couple of weeks of negotiations and a few teething problems with the new AEBF approved table templates, contracts were signed and the tables were made. Chris Ormsby - AEBF Executive Committee Member - Host President, made the trip to Dandenong South to view and approve all the tables and another item was ticked off the long list for Nationals preparations.

The majority of feedback from the players throughout the tournament indicate that all tables were of high standard. Once settled, all the tables ran true and being in the midst of it myself, I did not hear any complaints.

The accessories this year were plentiful and of high quality, with the exception of the brushes. I was aware of a few complaints from players regarding the quality of the brushes, and myself on the couple of occasions that I brushed a table found they left quite a few bristles.

General Nationals Preparations

In the lead up to Nationals, Melissa Crawley stepped in and all but took over the preparations for the venue advertising and Presentation night. Melissa and I worked day and night on many items in the lead up to the Nationals, liaising with designers for the Lightbox posters at the Venue, the Council for the Dean Street Banner and Council Grant, the Events Coordinator at the Commercial Club for our Awards night, including seating arrangements, meal planning and catering for all manner of specific dietary requirements, and table decorations.

Melissa and I organized with Jeff Duck to provide temporary \$10 Commercial Club Memberships and these were provided to States upon commencement of the Nationals. This initiative proved to be great value for money and every State and Territory took advantage of it.

A huge thank you to Melissa and Travis Crawley for their assistance with sourcing, delivering and setting up the trophies. I heard many comments on how fantastic they looked.

Albury City Council

During the year I set about researching what grants and/or assistance was available from government and local community organizations. I was fortunate in the early days of these enquiries to be recommended to and subsequently develop a sound professional relationship with Major Events

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Manager Ros Walls from the Albury City Council. Ros and I worked together to arrange the Dean Street welcome banner and the Council also offered us some monetary assistance. In return we were able to guarantee that we would have 250 plus players, umpires, adjudicators, officials and supporters in the region for 11 days, including the International Ladies for a bit of extra excitement.

Albury Mayor Kevin Mack and Ros Walls were invited to and attended our Opening Ceremony and we are extremely grateful for their assistance and their presence at our event. We hope to see them back next year.

International Test Series Australia English Lioness's V English Lioness's

For the first time in AEBF history, we welcomed the English Ladies Team – The Lionesses to our Australian Championships. Early on in the year we sent invitations to both the EPA and a contact in New Zealand, in hopes of an International Tri-Series event. Although the New Zealand boys were very keen, there was not enough funding or interest to field a team in the end. The same issues arose for the English boys, and after being told they were sending a team, the EPA then advised us this was not an option but an English Ladies side was quite receptive to the idea.

Unfortunately we struggled a bit with the lack of communication with the EPA, and were lucky to have much interest from Victorians Karen Winter and Lyndal Ellement, who initiated direct communication with the English Ladies. We were able to move forward much quicker with the many facets of organizing this International event due to their involvement.

The English Ladies were overwhelmed by the generosity of the Aussies overall, and the only negative to their trip was the scheduling. Unfortunately the AEBF Executive had our hands tied in this regard as the English Ladies flights were booked on their behalf midway through our tournament, leaving us with very few options to incorporate the teams and a singles event into the schedule.

The Ladies were well received and all feedback suggests the event was an enormous success and the English Ladies as well as our Aussie Girls enjoyed the event and the Lionesses time here in Australia.

The Ladies test series results were extremely close being 2-2 and came down to the last frame, which Nicole Welsh potted the winning black against Barbara Taylor to give the Aussies the win 3-2. In the singles event, Sharon James overcame Kolbe Poole 7 - 6.

All of the Aussie girls should be congratulated for being so accommodating with the additional matches in an already demanding schedule. Kolbe in particular who went deep not only in the International Series but made the final of the Australian Ladies singles as well. Thank you very much to Kolbe and all the Aussie girls for their time and commitment and thank you to Queensland's Rachel King for live streaming the International Singles match.

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I would like to take this opportunity to commend Lyndall Ellement on the brilliant artwork showcasing her amazing talent in the Test Series poster, which was displayed throughout the Venue and received much attention on Facebook prior to the event. Thank you Lyndall.

Schedule of Play

Some feedback from a number of the women in regards to the schedule was that they felt it was unfair to only be playing in the morning, while others preferred the routine. In addition, it has been noted that some spectators at home had a little trouble locating the schedule to plan their viewing. A suggestion for future years is to present our schedule more prominently online, in the lead up to and during the event.

Thanks to Doug Percy once again for all his time in putting this schedule together.

Program Books and Gifts

The AEBF Executive with the assistance of the Albury Wodonga Visitors Centre were able to provide a lovely welcome bag containing an Albury Visitors Guide, an AEBF water bottle, and a program book.

The design and print of Program Books was completed by our very own Exec Team Member Greg Dingle, and the finished product was of great quality. In keeping with previous years, some content submissions were left quite late, making the process somewhat rushed right before the commencement of the Championships. I believe that the AEBF handling this item which has in the past been a State/Territory responsibility, produced an informative and attractive design with minimal errors.

Live Streaming and Live Scoring

The AEBF organized for Cueball TV to join the AEBF Live streaming again and provide streaming every day on four of the 16 tables. This arrangement worked well throughout the tournament and received great feedback on both AEBF and Cueball TV.

The growth on our Facebook page and Facebook group shows a significant increase in numbers – the AEBF main page now has over 4000 followers and YouTube continues to grow with 200 people subscribing to the channel during the Championships.

The AEBF implemented mandatory live scoring using Poolstat again for this year's Nationals, and provided tablets which were signed in and out by players and Team Managers for every match played.

The Commercial Club had great reception and internet coverage was excellent. Unfortunately there were several Poolstat related technical issues at various stages during the tournament, which provided

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a few headaches for Doug, Tony and Team Managers. Greg Johncock was available at any time of the day or night to assist with an issues we had, and these were always quickly resolved.

Prior to the commencement of the Championships, there were some genuine concerns regarding players having to input their own scores during singles matches. This proved not to be the case, and every match was scored live and all feedback from this experience was positive.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Melissa and Travis Crawley, Aimee Firkins, Greg, Doug and Tony for the countless hours and patience with the 'glitches', the uploading of information and their continual assistance leading up to and during the Championships with the tablets and Poolstat. They all played a big part in going paperless and moving the AEBF forward with this amazing technology. A huge thank you to Greg Johncock for all the hours and hours of background work fixing problems and upgrading the web app.

Indigenous All Stars Challenge Match

The Indigenous Challenge saw 16 Indigenous representatives play on the All Stars team and 16 competitors from different States and territories - the All State's, participate in the challenge. For the first time since its conception, the Indigenous All Stars lost 20 -12 to a strong All States team.

Organizing of the Indigenous Challenge event was made quite easy with the assistance of Queenslander Gwen Anderson. Gwen offered up some of her drawings to use in the shirt design, and these proved extremely popular, with a second order in the process of being organized with the help of South Australian Carol Nunn.

Having no set format for the challenge in the past, the AEBF Executive made the decision to set a precedent this year that would carry over to the following 2 years that the Nationals are held at the Commercial Club.

There were no hiccups or negative feedback from this match apart from the scheduling. Some players felt they would have preferred the match played in an alternative time slot. Our challenge as a Committee when decided where to fit this match in, was including it with other Tournament matches for higher exposure, or scheduling it as a standalone event which ran the risk of a much smaller crowd.

The Indigenous All Stars Challenge is an important inclusion to our Nationals Titles and the AEBF Executive will ensure we do our best to accommodate the player's wishes in future years.

Pre Nationals Comp

Due to a change on the AEBF schedule and the AGM being split into two parts, there were few options available in running the Pre Nationals Competition. I chose to help out in this regard, and recruited

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local Snooker Committee Member/Player Kristian Lindsay to assist, who played a very important role on the eve of the National Titles commencing. Many thanks to Kristian for volunteering and giving up his time to run both of these competitions and handling it all with such good spirit. We hope to see him back in 2019 and 2020.

Unfortunately we could not complete either the Open or Ladies singles events on the night. Although we were able to utilize the 4 tables upstairs in the Snooker room making 20 tables in total, we had over 120 players in the Open and approximately 40 in the Ladies and the finals series was put off until further along in the Championships.

All players involved were very understanding of our the time constraints and scheduling and mid-way through the Championships we were able to play out the top 16 in the Open – with Jake McCartney defeating Michael Cacciola in the final. The ladies chose to split the prize money amongst the top 4. A big thank you to Dan Lynch from Cueball TV for filming as many matches as he could including the finals.

I recommend that in future we set aside time in the schedule to complete the finals series for the Pre Nationals comp. This is a popular event and this will relieve the pressure of competitors playing so late on the eve of the Championships commencing.

Umpires

Rules and Umpires Director Greg Dingle designed all umpires and adjudicators shirts this year. Live Streamed tables took priority with umpires as in previous years. The ABEF paid Umpires the standard rate of \$1.50 per frame and there was opportunities for one Umpire per State/Territory to receive free accommodation when umpiring 3 sessions per day. The free accommodation is offered within the AEBF/Commercial Club Sponsorship package and I believe was utilized quite well.

Unfortunately due to a long standing booking at the Golf Club, Umpires were moved from a temporary location to the Golf Club part way through the Nationals. We have been assured that this will not occur in 2019 and 2020. We are extremely grateful to Jeff Duck and the team at the Commercial Club for this opportunity to lower the costs for our Umpires at Nationals.

As in previous years, players and Team Managers were required to umpire some frames themselves. States supplying their own umpires did not have to share umpiring on the table that didn't have an Umpire. I would suggest in future that we consider having the side who does not have an Umpire, umpire the first and last round and the team that has been able to supply one umpire - umpire the middle round.

Congratulations to Australian Capital Territories Steve Phillips for being awarded his A Grade Umpires Accreditation.

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A special note and big thank you to Tracey Wessling and Michael McLeod who umpired all of the Australia v England Test Series Team Matches.

Personally I thought the Umpiring was extremely well organized and professional this year. Again, being in the middle of the teams matches I did not hear any complaints and all feedback from the event regarding Umpires was positive.

Presentation Night

Presentation night was held in the Stanley room at the Commercial Club. The room was presented beautifully by the events team and Doug Percy MC'd the night for the first time solo. One of the Commercial Club's Board Members Eddie Simmons gave a brief speech at the beginning of the evening, and the rest of the night went off without a hitch. The food was lovely and we had a great variety. Melissa and I had settled on the menu a couple of weeks prior and I recall hearing nothing but complimentary comments on the night and no negative feedback after the event. We catered for approximately 250 people, 20 plus with dietary requirements.

As with previous years, the room cleared very quickly once the Australian Team announcements were complete. We had considered a DJ and a dancefloor, but having the same occur year after year, people leaving straight away, we figured it wasn't worth spending the money.

Quest Sponsorship

Business Development Veronica Larkin and I hit it off early on this year when I took over from Greg Dingle with the Quest Sponsorship contract. We were able to meet on a couple of occasions when my work took me to Albury, and these meetings further cemented our personal and professional relationship.

Veronica has been instrumental in assisting the AEBF with lowering the costs of housing all of our hard working Executive during the Nationals. The staff, from front Reception to housekeeping, maintenance and the adjoining Q Manhattans team were all just as accommodating during our stay.

This year we were only able to accommodate two of the eight States and Territories at the Albury Quest due to circumstances beyond our control, although with a little bit of early organization from State and Territory Committees, we should be able to accommodate many more of our participants in both Quests in 2019 and 2020.

A very big thank you to Quest Owners Noel and Madelaine Wood and Veronica for their generosity and assistance leading up to and during the Nationals.

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Conclusion

Overall, the 2018 National Eight Ball Championships proved to be a success thanks to the dedicated volunteers involved in putting it all together and all of the Sponsors. The Commercial Club Management have expressed their appreciation to the AEBF for choosing their venue to host the National Championships for three years, the good behavior of all the competitors, officials and spectators and their support of the Commercial Club for the duration of the National Championships.

I am extremely grateful for the expertise and commitment of the hard working crew that is the AEBF Executive Committee. To President Doug Percy, Secretary Tony Cannan, Rules and Umpires Director Greg Dingle and Media Officer Andrew Saltmarsh, hats off to you all for being there to open the room up early every day, and to Doug and Tony for being there to close it late nearly every night. The time and effort in-between did not go unnoticed.

Melissa Crawley did quite a few hours of work while she was present at the Venue, but Meli and I did most of our work behind the scenes leading up to the Championships, in the preparation and planning of many aspects of our National Titles and Presentation night.

It's been an incredibly eventful and busy year for the AEBF Executive. With the assistance of our newest team Members Phil Dando and Chris Jeffery, we all look forward to a much more relaxed year leading up to the 2019 Nationals back at the Commercial Club in Albury.

A warm and sincere thank you to all our Sponsors for their support and contributions over the years. We are all very proud to be a part of such an elite group of individuals and participate in our beloved sport in a variety of ways, and it is such an honor to be a part of these Championships.

Thank you to Ray Atwell and the team at CL&S, the Commercial Club, Quest and all our other Sponsors and supporters for making this possible.

All singles and teams results and photos can be found on our website and Facebook page and group.

Lock in your holidays and accommodation for next year – dates: 17th to the 26th of October 2019

On behalf of the AEBF Executive Committee,

Tracy Butterworth

Tracy Butterworth

Vice President

Australian Eight Ball Federation

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