

MINUTES OF THE 2009 G.H.T.F.A. YEAR END MEETING

Held on Thursday, November 12, 2009

Meeting opened at 7:00 pm

In Attendance: Frank Bolla, Rick Little, Brad McNamara, Dave Nelson, Terry Roberts, Sean Seaton ('C'),

Absent: Bill Fournier, Randy Harris ('B'), Tony Spagnoli, Byron Young ('A')

Opening Remarks

- Dave Nelson thanked the executive for all their volunteer efforts throughout the year.

Field and Scheduling Issues

- Requests for fields for the 2010 season have been submitted to the City. The City has indicated that they will not permit any increase in field usage, as requested, but will maintain the same field allotment as 2009. Field allotments will not be finalized by the City until March 2010.
- Brad McNamara has posted the tentative 2010 schedule on the website and has suggested that triple header games be held on Sundays next year to ensure we can accommodate the same number of teams and games as 2009.
- Rick Little noted that Nelson has been closed again and that this caused some problems with the Masters league this year. This is becoming an annual occurrence and a problem for the league. Rick also noted that few fields are available for night games and that the new turf fields are cost prohibitive due to high usage fees charged by the City.
- **Dave Nelson** will attempt to contact Doug Pladsen at the City to attempt to get help in having fields allocated to the GHTFA for night games.
- Field costs for 2010 are unknown at this time, **Dave Nelson or Tony Spagnoli** will follow-up with the City to attempt to get a commitment on 2010 field costs.
- It will be necessary to implement a follow-up system in 2010 to ensure that unused fields are cancelled to eliminate unnecessary field costs. Fields require a 31 day advance cancellation notice. **Dave Nelson** will follow-up with Tony Spagnoli to ensure field utilization is maximized with minimal costs.
- **Brad McNamara** hopes to have all field allotments finalized on the website before the 2010 season starts.
- It is hoped that a field will be available on Tuesday nights in August and September to allow for any weather related game cancellations to be played.

- **All teams** will be required to submit their game scheduling request before the 2nd Annual General Meeting (AGM) so that all schedules can be finalized and loaded on the website prior to that meeting.

Referee Assignments

- Brad McNamara indicated all referee assignments are posted on the website including certified referees and their certification level.
- The criteria for certification advancement are also posted.
- Rick Little felt the 2009 season went well but felt that some teams had a problem finding certified referees to substitute for them when they could not fulfill their team referee assignments. He also felt there were problems with teams not being diligent about getting to their assignments on time even though their assignment was scheduled for the game after they had played and at the same field.
- **Brad McNamara** hopes to have a “bank” of certified referees listed on the website next year that teams can call when they need help fulfilling their referee assignment.
- Sean Seaton has had some feedback from teams indicating there are a number of teams that would prefer to pay a higher registration fee rather than be subject to mandated referee assignments.
- There was some discussion as to what this increased cost would be, the executive felt that if such a process was put into place, then teams wishing to participate in this scheme would be subject to a 50% surcharge in registration costs.
- There was also some concern as to how this would affect referee scheduling with a number of teams not supplying referees this could cause problems with the available referees being pulled from the GHTFA player/referee pool. It was suggested that teams opting out of the mandated referee program have their games refereed by the SOTFOA referees and that the increased registration costs could offset those costs.
- There were also concerns expressed over how this could adversely affect the league as the mandated referee program was put in place to ensure that referees would continue to be developed to ensure the continuation of the league at its current team complements. Also, the referee program has been very helpful in ensuring new teams and players are aware of the full rules of the game and the complexities of refereeing in the GHTFA. It was noted that referee abuse incidents have dramatically dropped since the introduction of the program.
- **Brad McNamara** will prepare a constitutional amendment on the “opt out” proposal for presentation at the 2010 AGM.
- This proposal would be on a one year trial basis.
- Sean also proposed abolishing the mandated number of referees a team must carry in favour of a “teams must referee a set number of games” format.
- It was agreed that while the current mandated referee counts and certification levels a team must carry are difficult to achieve, the program must stay in place for the betterment and continuation of the league.
- A review of the mandated certification level requirements will be done. Rick Little noted that many players do not have the opportunity to fulfill the required

- referee assignments during the season to allow them to advance to the next levels and thus fulfill the required team mandated numbers and levels in the time frames specified in the constitution. **Rick Little** will review the constitutional team referee requirements for Level II and III referees and prepare the necessary constitutional amendment for the 2010 AGM.
- It was agreed that teams must be more diligent in arriving to games on time for their referee assignments. To this end it was proposed that referees arriving late, for other than travel time reasons, will not be paid and arriving after the first quarter or not arriving at all will subject the team to the \$125 missed assignment fine. **Terry Roberts** will prepare a constitutional amendment to this affect for the 2010 AGM.
 - Sean noted that there was a disparity of team referee assignments last year, it is hoped that the 2010 season will be better balanced as many of the scheduling problems have been identified and should be corrected in 2010.
 - **Brad McNamara** will also update the website to make referee assignments easily accessible on the website.
 - Dave Nelson noted that referee payments for 2009 have been finalized, prepared and will be mailed out the week of November 16.
 - Dave Nelson noted that the GHTFA will have at least two referee clinics in 2010, one for Level I and one for Level II & III referees. At least 10 players are required to run a GHTFA referee clinic, should numbers not warrant a GHTFA clinic then players wishing certification will be included in the SOTFOA clinics.
 - Rick Little will review the current referee pool and ensure that all players who are eligible for certification advancement are invited to the appropriate clinics in 2010. Rick stressed the importance of referees fulfilling the game assignment qualifications before proceeding to the next certification level.

Website Update

- **Brad McNamara** indicated that the new Sharepoint portal for the website will be set up, with public and private content management capabilities, by December.
- Once available he will make it accessible to the executive for review and suggested changes.
- Brad is trying to be as cost effective as possible, in purchasing required software, while ensuring the website has the required functionality and capabilities.
- **Frank Bolla** has a large amount of historical information, in the form of pictures from past years, which he hopes to have loaded up to the website. This is a large task and Frank is looking for help in getting this information scanned in so that Brad can include it on the website.
- **Brad McNamara** will be updating the website with new colours to ensure that any grayscale printing of items from the website can be easily accommodated.
- **Brad** will be updating the website with the Bolla Bowl registration information and dates. Bolla Bowl is held on the Saturday of Super Bowl weekend.
- **Brad McNamara** will publish the teams being considered for movement (see Team Movement and Rosters below) on the website.

- Minutes from the Year-end Executive meeting will be posted on the website with an email message notification to all members informing them that the minutes have been posted.

Team Movement and Rosters

- The top 2 teams from league play results in 2009 will be considered for movement to the higher league, with the bottom 2 teams from each league being considered for movement down to the lower league. All team movement will be subject to team enrolment and equalization factors at the AGM. Any team being considered for movement will be notified prior to the AGM to allow them to adequately prepare their teams for the 2010 season.
- All league presidents must make recommendations for which teams should be considered for movement. Brad McNamara will publish the teams being considered for movement on the website.
- The GHTFA runs on an honour system with team rosters. It is all teams' responsibility to ensure they have their roster submitted to the GHTFA at the AGM or Annual Registration Meeting, on official Touch Football Ontario (TFO) roster forms.
- Teams must validate that the roster, once entered on the GHTFA website, is complete and accurate. Team rosters are used to verify valid team members for playoffs and there have been instances where team rosters were inaccurate and/or used to uphold protests so all teams must ensure their accuracy.
- The roster deadlines will be posted on the website prior to the AGM and reminder emails will be sent to all team contacts.
- Teams should be aware that all player eligibility protests must be made to the referee prior to the start of the game so that all officials are aware that the game is being played under protest. Terry Roberts will prepare a constitutional amendment on this subject for the 2010 AGM.

League Presidents and Executive Issues

- An increased presence from league presidents is required within their respective leagues. It is the league president's responsibility to ensure the smooth operation of the league. Presidents should utilize the executive to assist them in any issues that may arise.
- Sean Seaton will create a "terms of reference" document to outline the roles and responsibilities of a league president. This information will also be included as an amendment to the constitution for the 2010 AGM.
- League presidents should also ensure that all trophies are present for the championship games of their respective league and be present to make the trophy presentations.
- Discussions were held around the problems in getting players involved at the executive level. Currently there is no succession plan to ensure that the executive positions are adequately covered, with most of the executive having held their positions in excess of 20 years. A proposal was made by Sean Seaton to limit

league president tenures to three (3) years with a mentoring process in place after that term to promote them into assistant and full executive roles. It's hoped that this will get more people involved in ensuring that the league is a viable association in future years.

- **Sean Seaton** will create a constitutional amendment, for the 2010 AGM, to limit league president tenures to 3 years with a mentoring program after that term to promote people into the executive.
- **All current executive members** will create a "terms of reference" document to outline the roles and responsibilities of their positions to assist in future succession and mentoring plans. These terms of references will be included as constitutional amendments for the 2010 AGM.

Other Business

- The non-glass rule is not being adhered to at GHTFA games. It is important that no glass bottles be used at all fields. Many times glass bottles are left behind and are subsequently broken by kids. This is a safety concern and all teams should be using plastic cups or cans for any refreshments consumed at the fields. Under no circumstance, whether left on the ground or disposed of in garbage receptacles, can glass bottles be left at a field. It is the league president, and all players, responsibility to ensure that all teams adhere to this rule.
- Dave Nelson commented that the scheduling issues which resulted last year due to problems with field scheduling issues with the City should be resolved for next year.
- Rick Little commented that disciplinary issues were greatly reduced this year over prior years. It is felt that this is due in part to the current refereeing program and a greater understanding on the part of all players of the intricacies of refereeing within the GHTFA.
- Rick Little felt that game play within the GHTFA is flowing well with the GHTFA referees. This is due in part to player/refs becoming more familiar with their assigned roles and a greater understanding of the referee role from the general player population.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm