

World Association Croquet Team Championship and MacRobertson Shield Consultation Document – February 2009

By: The Croquet Association

For: The World Croquet Federation and its members

Background

The Croquet Association has just completed a review of its international policy, and has decided to consult with the WCF and its other member associations on this and other issues. We hope that this consultation will result in agreement at the WCF Council meeting in May 2009, although we recognise that the time-scale is quite tight.

The Current Situation

The MacRobertson Shield is currently recognised as the World AC Team Championship by the WCF. It is run by the CA, ACA, NZCA, and USCA rather than by the WCF. Any country can play in principle, but needs to have a sufficiently strong team of six players in order to do so. There is a strong feeling that the MacRobertson Shield has been extremely successful as it stands and should remain a competition for teams of six, for strong teams. There has also been a long-standing desire for there to be a World AC Team Championship in which all members of the WCF can play. Most members of the WCF are not able to produce a team of six players, let alone of the standard specified for the MacRobertson Shield. Croquet is too small a sport for there to be two competing World AC Team Championships. Recently, there have also been moves for the MacRobertson Shield to come under the auspices of the WCF, and this document is the CA's response to those moves.

Future Possibilities

Four courses seem possible.

1. The MacRob could evolve into a full World Team Championship.
2. The MacRob could lose its status as WCF World Team Championship and a rival event could be set up by the WCF.
3. The MacRob could come under the auspices of the WCF without extending.
4. The status quo could remain.

The CA is strongly in favour of option 1. We believe it is important to retain teams of six for the MacRobertson Shield, as a smaller team is not so representative of a country's playing strength which would dilute the meaning of being "World Team Champions". Most countries cannot produce teams of six, so they will have to be allowed to enter smaller teams. As teams of different sizes cannot play each other, the obvious solution is to have a multi-tiered event. We believe that such an event would address all of the issues highlighted above, and is the way to go. A detailed explanation of how such a multi-tiered event might work was produced by Ian Burrigge and widely circulated in 2008. It shows that the format is feasible, and we heard positive feedback from several WCF member associations. The format described there is for a second tier with teams of four, and a third tier with teams of two. The three tiers should be played at approximately the same time, but would not have to be played in the same country. The number of teams in each tier would not be fixed rigidly, but would depend on the standard of the teams which can be raised. One advantage of this format is that it sets realistic targets for countries to achieve in their croquet development: being able to produce a team with two, four, or six players, at an appropriate level.

In 2008, Reg Bamford put forward a proposal for an “International Team” to play in the MacRobertson Shield, which was not adopted. The “multi-tier” format has two advantages over that proposal for expansion: the teams represent countries, and many more players would be able to play.

Our Proposal

We would like to propose that:

1. A WCF World Team Championships Committee be set up, with representatives appointed by the four MacRobertson Shield countries as well as from the WCF and perhaps other member associations.
2. This Committee would have responsibility for future World AC Team Championships, consisting of the MacRobertson Shield, a second tier for teams of four, and a third tier for teams of two.
3. The Committee would make decisions based on a simple majority, except that any change to the MacRobertson Shield regulations would need to be agreed by the representatives of all four MacRobertson Shield countries (as at present).
4. As is currently the case with the MacRobertson Shield, Great Britain would be considered one country and its constituent WCF member associations would not also be able to enter the World AC Team Championship, if it were held in 2010. This position could be reviewed before the next MacRobertson Shield, which will be held in New Zealand in 2014.

The CA will host the MacRobertson Shield in August 2010, and would like to hold the first occurrence of the lower tiers simultaneously with it (although we are not yet in a position to guarantee to do so). This would require us to move quickly, and agreement would have to be reached at the WCF Council meeting in May 2009. A motion to change the WCF Statutes would be required for that meeting, and the deadline for such motions is 13th March. We therefore ask you to give thought to this proposal and give us your feedback by the end of February. In particular, we would be very happy to receive comments and suggestions on the format of a World Team Championship. It would also be helpful to know if you would expect to be able to enter a team if the event were held in 2010, and of how many players.

Feedback can be sent to: Jonathan Kirby, Chairman, CA International Committee, at pjkirby@gmail.com and copied to Brian Storey, WCF Secretary-General secretary@wfcroquet.org