

Chairman's Report 2023

Welcome to all of you to this, which I believe is the 24th season of the Boules in Gwent league. On a sad note, to start, we have lost during this past year a few members and I would like those clubs where this has happened to give a few words about their and the league's loss.

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Can we now please raise our glasses to absent friends.

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Thank you for all turning up and there is a good turnout which shows that you're all interested in the league and in competing.

I hope that you have all downloaded the agenda from the website requested by Robin.

Those of you who have been here from the start, such as Robin and myself, will have noticed that there are changes from those days and with increased numbers this was to be expected.

There is a stronger competitiveness and perhaps in a few cases this league, which had the name of "friendly league", has put that name to the test.

Certainly, Robin and I had more problems than in any previous year.

This was mainly due to the Covid situation and in last year's AGM, we did not see difficulties coming and thus we did not address the problem.

We allowed too much leeway away from the rules to allow for Covid match postponements.

The problem is that once you bend rules for a certain situation it can and is taken to mean that this flexibility can apply to other situations.

This will be explained further in one of the items on the agenda.

We started last year with our usual league mêlée with this one being held for the Ukraine appeal. It was hosted at Caerleon PC, and thanks to the club once again for helping the league.

Those who played had a great time and by the end of day we had raised over £600, and this increased to over £800 with the further work in getting sponsors by Tansy Mayfield from Caerleon who had proposed such a charity. We even had donations from players in Tenerife!

So, a good start to events outside the league matches but after that things went downhill with our fixture v Welsh Petanque and our presentation evening both being cancelled due to lack of support!

The league divisions were competitive and it's great to see so many people out enjoying playing the game.

In division 1 Caerleon A won for the fifth year running, an excellent performance, but they were put under pressure by the club's blue team and Twyn y Ffrwd. Over the years there have been several teams that have been dominant for few years so nothing is certain for the coming year.

The 2nd division was won, after quite a few years of competing in the league, by the Upper Cock. Below them, coming through in consecutive seasons from the lower divisions was Greenlawn B. Both teams will be playing in division 1 for the first time.

The 3rd division saw no surprise with the Pottery continuing their climb through the divisions and Clytha B coming second to move up a division.

In division 4 Greenlawn D in their first season follow in the footsteps of their club's other teams and won this division with ROF exiles taking second place.

Congratulations to these teams and shining through in these lower divisions is the need to be out there playing on club night and having fun regardless of results.

The cup final day was a success with a very friendly atmosphere and good games. In the main cup final one game took nearly two hours to finish. The result being a win for the second consecutive season by the Wheatsheaf Falcons who were made to play all the way to the end by Twyn y Ffrwd.

In the plate, congratulations to the 2nd division team, Machen, who made it to the final. They turned up having had a problem with some players being unavailable; Caerleon Blues won comfortably. However, at the end the blues team took Machen's newish players aside and gave their time helping them with some coaching tips.

There was excellent hospitality from the Greyhound Inn where the games were played so thanks to our hosts Kelly and Steve.

For myself after the troubles of the league, this final renewed my confidence in the way we can engage in a competitive but friendly manner.

After this event we all stayed socialising for a good time, and I am still not sure how I avoided being kidnapped on the Twyn y Ffrwd bus.

However, that aside, by the end of last season Robin and I were disillusioned, and certain things had put us both under pressure which at our age we found difficult. Robin under correct pressure from his wife, who was concerned for his health, decided to retire. I, with further thought have decided to put myself up for election for a final season to keep some continuity. Obviously, this is up to you.

We have two excellent people who have come forward Derek Jones and Basil White, but more of that later.

Also, I would like to thank Wilf from Machen and Paul from Monmouth for their work in keeping our website and Facebook page up to date.

To finish Robin and I want to leave the league in a better place than at the end of the season so before the new committee takes over, we would like to continue in our positions during the agenda items so we can give our thoughts and try to explain what has been going wrong.

Thank you for listening to me and let us once again have a constructive meeting.

Shun