

# **Licensing of Scottish Technical Officials – FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

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## **1. Introduction**

The recommendations in my report have been developed to deliver a way forward for the licensing of Scottish officials. My draft report was circulated to the STO committee for comment on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October. The amended report was presented to the Board on the 26<sup>th</sup> of October. All recommendations were Board approved and therefore the below outlines the agreed way forward for the licensing of officials.

## **2. Background**

At the STO seminar held in Perth on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> September I agreed to a request from the seminar to carry out a review of the licensing process in Scotland which had clearly not proceeded as the technical officials expected. A presentation on licensing had been given by Richard Gordon during which a number of questions had been raised, primarily to determine when the matter would be resolved and the information issued to those technical officials who had made an application. Richard was unable to give any clear indication on future dates and timelines and committed to producing these within two weeks. This was unsatisfactory to those present.

The decision to have this review was taken by the seminar after Richard had made his two week commitment on the timeline and had left the meeting during the lunch break. I initially put the two week window Richard had committed to on hold in order to conduct this review. I now feel that this report covers the points raised and as such supersedes the requirement for Richard to make a reply.

While seeking to understand the position we were in, I felt that there was an equal need to move forward. In carrying out this review I have sought to provide both and will make recommendations on that basis. This will also take into account the feedback I have received from the national STO committee members.

## **3. History**

The concept of licensing was introduced to separate out those officials who are active in swimming and who are therefore better able to apply the swimming rules from those officials who have not been on the pond side for sometime. It is clearly in the swimmers' and the sport's best interest that the rules, which are

periodically changed, are applied correctly. Key points of history are outlined below:

- 3.1 Licensing of officials was introduced in England and Wales at the beginning of 2007 and the time period for application lasted throughout that year.
- 3.2 In Scotland the decision taken was to introduce licensing in 2008 and to provide a Scottish version of the information pack. The pack was to be produced by adapting the version issued by GB.
- 3.3 Applications forms were issued and to date some 200 officials have applied.
- 3.4 Licensing in England and Wales costs the technical official £10 while in Scotland a commitment was given that it would be free to registered technical officials.

#### **4. Key Issues**

The key issues as I surmise them are as follows;

- 4.1 The timeline for the issue licensing was targeted for 3 months post 2008 AGM when the STO membership for the year would be known. Cards were produced in July which was later than the applicants had expected.
- 4.2 A decision was taken to issue the licence cards advising that the supporting information pack was not yet available and this would follow.
- 4.3 Many applicants were unhappy with the quality of the photograph on the cards. This was due to the large variety of photograph types submitted with the applications that could not be adapted to fully fit the card (software is now available to better deal with this issue).
- 4.4 It was not fully understood what was expected to be provided to the officials. The 'pack' issued in England and Wales included a carry bag in addition to the written information. Attempts to source an equivalent bag identified potential costs for which there was no budget provision, leading to discussions on what could be provided within budget that met the licensing requirements.
- 4.5 Producing a Scottish version of the Institute of Swimming (and hence ASA) information pack was considered essential. An electronic copy of the IoS information pack from which the revised information pack was to be prepared, was not yet available.
- 4.6 The timeline for the production of the packs seems to have run on unmanaged. Rather than wait for the electronic version to be produced for modification, Scottish Swimming and the STO Committee should have produced their own material.

The net result is to date:

- We have no information pack to issue and no clear indication of when it would be available.
- Some 200 technical officials have applied to be licensed officials have received their licence cards, but not their packs.
- The technical officials community feel that they are undervalued and being treated poorly compared with their colleagues in the other home countries.
- The Scottish Swimming staff who are responsible for delivering this project feel they have not been fully supported in dealing with the issues that have arisen during the introduction of this project.

In speaking with Richard and Ashley, I can confirm that Scottish Swimming recognises that the STOs have been disappointed in the handling of the licensing initiative and are sorry for any distress caused by the delays and discussion at the recent STO seminar.

## **5. Recommendations**

While carrying out this review I would question why we would seek to have our technical officials licensed in Scotland. Since the introduction of the license concept we have moved to assessing and certificating most categories of official in all the home countries at a GB level. I see no reason why we should differentiate with licensing.

### *Recommendations*

*I recommend that we dispense with the idea of a Scottish licensed official in favour of a GB licensed official.*

*I recommend that we change to this new model in three phases:*

- *Phase 1 - the management of those who have already applied for a SS license*
- *Phase 2 – the management of those who had intended to apply for SS licensing but held off on doing so*
- *Phase 3 – the management of those wish to apply for a GB license in the future*

A series of actions need to take place in order to implement the above recommendations and towards this end, and in an attempt to move us forward, the following actions will now be progressed:

## Phase 1

- 5.1 The technical officials who applied to SS will be submitted by SS directly to GB to be GB Licensed Officials.
- 5.2 A letter will be sent to each applicant (by 7<sup>th</sup> November) that will seek their agreement to this action, accepting that there are Data Protection issues involved. We will proceed to make application to GB on their behalf unless they advise otherwise by a nominated date(24<sup>th</sup> November).
- 5.3 Ideally, the technical officials who applied to SS will be submitted directly to GB to be GB Licensed Officials. If new information is required from these applicants, SS will facilitate this process.
- 5.4 GB will process these applications en bloc and will invoice Scottish Swimming for the total license fee cost. This cost has been approved by a Board decision on 26<sup>th</sup> October.
- 5.5 GB will issue the identical pack to each applicant as at present for ASA and Swim Wales officials (this will carry IoS branding).
- 5.6 New GB identity badges will be produced and issued with the pack. (Hopefully this can be done from the photos submitted with the application forms however new digital photos may be required for this).

## Phase 2

I am aware, and have informed the Board, that there are other registered technical officials who, for a variety of reasons, have not yet made an application to SS for licensing, but had fully intended to do so.

- 5.7 Any such individual should now make application using the **GB Application Form** and complying with its requirements. This will ensure that the data, photographs etc. are compatible with the GB requirement.
  - 5.7.1 Individuals who wish to meet the £10 cost themselves or by their club, should make application to GB directly, enclosing the fee as others have previously done.
  - 5.7.2 Individuals who wish SS to pay the fee should send the completed form to the SS office, for the attention of Richard Gordon. These applications will be held and submitted to GB en bloc as a second phase application. The cost of these applications will be met by SS.
- 5.8 To give sufficient time for such applications to be received, this second phase for application will apply until Friday 12 December 2008.
- 5.9 GB will issue the identical pack to each applicant as at present for ASA and Swim Wales officials (this will carry IoS branding).
- 5.10 GB identity badges will be produced and issued with the pack.

### Phase 3

- 5.11 After Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December, any further applications should be made directly to GB enclosing the license fee.
- 5.12 Individuals who wish to do so can then make application to the National STO committee to have the fee reimbursed. This cost will be met from the STO budget. If this cost results in a detrimental effect on the committee delivering their Development Plan this should be highlighted to the Board. The intention here is to simplify the application process and not inhibit the development of technical officials.
- 5.13 Applicants in phase 3 should be made aware that GB has a vetting system for the licensing of its officials requiring two referee signatures
- 5.14 GB will issue the identical pack to each applicant. In the short term, this will be the current model for ASA and Swim Wales officials (this will carry IoS branding). However, it is hoped that the commitment to ensure the materials are all British will soon be realised as a review will be carried out to alter the documentation for **future issues** to reflect a GB status in place of the IoS logo.

### **6. Conclusion**

No solution covering such a large group of individuals can meet everyone's exact requirements. I hope that these actions are sufficient to meet the overall need to move us forward while not disadvantaging significantly any one individual.

I wish to thank everyone who has taken the time to discuss the many points raised. At all times everyone I have spoken too has been committed to supporting a positive way forward rather than dwell on past mistakes, as is usually the case, when we deal directly with the issues.

Allan Fletcher

SASA President