

# PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO SJA CONSTITUTION

*To be discussed at the Sports Journalists' Association AGM on Thursday 6 June 2024*

*We are proposing the following minor modifications to the constitution, for your consideration*

## 1. TITLE

The name of the Association shall be "The Sports Journalists' Association of Great Britain" (SJA) hereinafter called "The Association".

## 2. OBJECTS

The objects of the Association shall be to:

1. Promote and maintain a high professional standard among journalists who specialise in sport in all its branches and to serve their interests.
2. Cooperate with other sports journalism bodies.
3. Cooperate with sports organisers so as to ensure that journalists have the best facilities in the covering of events.
4. Encourage improved services in all forms of communications so that the reporting of sports events shall be reliable, speedy and accurate.
5. Welcome visiting sports journalists from abroad and assist them in the carrying out of their duties.
6. Promote social intercourse among members.

## 3. MEMBERSHIP

The Association shall have three categories of membership and applicants shall be proposed and seconded by full members and elected or refused membership by the General Committee. The categories are:

1. Full members: Being persons engaged in creative editorial production in press, radio or television (including photographers and cartoonists and authors) and the internet, a significant proportion of whose work is in sport. Lecturers teaching sports journalism or a closely-related subject are also eligible.
2. Associate members: The General Committee may accept as Associate Members those persons not eligible for full membership.
3. Honorary members: The Annual Meeting shall have the right to elect Honorary members. **This distinction may be granted only to** members who have given outstanding service to the Association. Such members shall not pay the annual subscription but shall have full membership rights.

4. Any member whose subscription has not been paid in full within four months of the due date (see 7: 4) may have his or her membership lapsed. One month's notice of intention to lapse shall be sent to the member. (This shall not apply where the special circumstances have been invoked by the Committee)
5. The General Committee shall have power to consider re-application for membership from any person whose membership has lapsed under Rule 3(4) and shall re-admit these former members provided that twice the annual subscription or the sum of the back fees (whichever is the smaller) plus the subscription for the current year is paid.
6. Any member whose circumstances of employment no longer entitles him or her to membership as set out in Rule 3(1) or 3(2) shall inform the Secretary of this fact. The General Committee shall have the power to vary the category of membership or request the resignation of a member according to circumstances after due notice has been given to the member concerned.
7. The General Committee may expel from the Association any member whose conduct is such as shall, in their opinion, be injurious to the character of the Association or the interests of the members. Before members are expelled, their conduct should be the subject of an inquiry by the General Committee during which they should be given the opportunity to defend themselves and to justify or explain their conduct.  
If a majority of the Committee present when the matter is inquired into are of the opinion that a member has been guilty of such conduct as aforesaid and that the member has failed to justify or explain it satisfactorily, the General Committee shall call upon the member to resign and, if a member does not resign, shall expel him. A member expelled shall forfeit all the privileges of membership and all rights against the Association.
8. Any person whose membership has been lapsed under Rule 3 (4) or has been expelled under Rule 3 (7) shall be *persona non grata* at any Association meeting or function. They shall not be permitted to attend even as a guest of a member.

## 4. ASSOCIATES

1. Organisations: Journalistic groups representing a single sport, technical or regional interests, may affiliate Associate organisations at an annual fee to be determined by the Committee. However, individual members of these organisations, unless they are also individual members of the SJA, do not become entitled to full membership rights of the Association.
2. Individuals: The Annual General Meeting shall have the right to elect as Honorary Associates persons from outside the profession who have rendered long and outstanding service to sports journalism. Such Associates shall pay no subscriptions and have no rights or privileges appertaining to full, associate or honorary members as indicated under Rule 3.

## 5. OFFICERS

1. The Officers of the Association shall be:

1. The Chair

2. The Vice-chair

\* Or alternatively, there shall be Joint-chairs

3. The Hon Secretary

4. The Hon Treasurer

2. The Officers shall be elected by the Annual General Meeting to serve for one year and shall take office immediately. The General Committee is empowered to appoint during the appropriate year and if considered necessary, any members of the General Committee to become Officers, specifically to assist the Hon. Secretary and the Hon. Treasurer.

3. They shall be ex-officio members of the General Committee, as shall be the Immediate Past Chair.

4. They shall be eligible for re-election

5. In the event of a vacancy occurring through the death or resignation of an officer or for any other reason, it may be filled temporarily at the discretion of the General Committee.

6. The serving Officers, including the Immediate Past Chair, shall be empowered to form an executive committee to meet as and when necessary to conduct the business of the Association. Its decisions shall be subject to ratification by the General Committee. Members of the General Committee may attend such executive meetings by invitation.

## 6. PRESIDENT

The General Committee may, if it deems necessary, recommend the appointment of a President, subject to confirmation by the AGM. The President must be a member of the Association. The President shall:

1. Be appointed only with the agreement of the General Committee.
2. Be primarily the figurehead of the Association at such functions, social or professional, at which his/her presence is deemed appropriate.
3. Not be required to attend meetings of the General Committee or Executive unless specifically requested to do so, but would be expected to attend the Annual General Meeting.
4. Be subject to re-appointment after three years in office, or sooner if circumstances dictate. Should interim appointments be recommended by the General Committee they should be subject to confirmation by an Extraordinary AGM (vide Rule 9).

## 7. FINANCE

1. The financial year shall start on January 1 in each year and end on the following December 31.
2. The Annual Subscription shall be determined by resolution at the Annual General Meeting.
3. The Annual Subscription shall be payable on application for membership and shall be returnable in the case of unsuccessful application.
4. The Annual Subscription shall become payable on a 12-month rolling basis from the date of joining the association.
5. The General Committee shall have the right to require a member or members to pay the Annual Subscription by Bankers' Order.

## 8. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

1. The Annual General Meeting shall be the supreme governing authority of the Association and shall consist of the Honorary and Full members of the Association (with power to vote) and Honorary Associate members and Associate members (without power to vote).
2. It shall meet once a year, to:
  1. Receive the report of the general committee of the work of the previous year.
  2. Approve the audited statement of accounts for the previous financial year.
  3. Decide upon the policy for the ensuing year.
  4. Elect the officers (see Rule 5) and members of the General Committee (see Rule 10).
  5. Appoint the auditors.
  6. Carry out such other functions as are provided for in the Constitution and Rules but which are not specifically referred to above.
  7. Conduct any other relevant business.
3. The Secretary shall give notice of the date and venue of the Annual General Meeting by no later than 21 days preceding the Annual General Meeting.
4. Motions not already published for inclusion in the Agenda must be proposed and seconded by full members and submitted to the Secretary in writing no later than 7 days before the date of the meeting. Copies of the Agenda including such motions shall be made available at the Annual General Meeting.
5. Notice of the Agenda and of the provisions made for motions under Rule 8 must be sent to all members prior to the Annual General Meeting.
6. Any items submitted after the due time laid down in Rule 8(4) may be accepted only at the discretion of the Chairman subject to subsequent approval by the Annual General Meeting.
7. At the Annual General Meeting the chair shall be taken by the President or in his absence the Chairman, or in his absence, the Vice-chairman. In the absence of all three the Annual General Meeting shall elect a Chairman from

among its number. The Chairman of the meeting shall have a second casting vote.

8. To establish a quorum, at least 15 members of the Association must be present. If a quorum is not established, the Annual General Meeting shall be formally adjourned for not less than 7 days and not more than 28 whereupon any number attending may form a quorum. **For clarification, attendance is deemed to be either in person or by joining the designated online platform.**
9. All decisions, with exception of those involving alterations to the Constitution and Rules (see Rule 13) shall be made **by** a simple majority of those entitled to vote.
10. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.

## 9. EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

The Secretary shall, whenever the General Committee think fit, or at any time upon requisition in writing of any 20 full members, **be empowered to** convene an Extraordinary Meeting. Such a meeting shall be held not more than 28 days after requisition and there shall be not less than 14 days' notice which shall include **publication of the** Agenda of the meeting. Only matters for which the meeting is called shall be discussed at an Extraordinary Meeting **and these shall be included in the agenda.**

## 10. GENERAL COMMITTEE

1. The General Committee shall be responsible for the Management of the Association and shall implement the policy as laid down by the Annual General Meeting.
2. The General Committee shall consist of:
  1. The Officers (Rule 5)
  2. The Immediate Past Chairman
  3. A maximum of 10 other full members elected by the Annual General Meeting (Rule 8b).
  4. Any member(s) elected to the Committee(s) of AIPS and/or UEPS (**AIPS Europe**).
  5. Any chair of judges for the SJA Journalism Awards. They shall be entitled to vote.
3. The General Committee shall meet at least six times a year. **For clarification, this may be in person or via an online platform or a combination of both.**
4. The Secretary shall give at least seven clear days' notice of all such meetings to every member of the Committee together with the Agenda of the meeting.
5. At any **committee** meeting, the chair shall be taken by the Chair, one of the joint chairs or the vice chair. In the absence of both these officers, the Committee shall elect a chair from among the members present. The chair of the meeting shall have a second (casting) vote.
6. To establish a quorum at least five **committee** members must be present, otherwise if a minimum of three Officers are present Rule 5(6) shall apply. All decisions must be made by a simple majority of those present and entitled to

vote. 6a: It is expected that all members of the General Committee should attend at least four meetings each year.

7. The General Committee shall have the power to co-opt members to the General Committee. Those so co-opted will not have the power to vote.
8. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.
9. The General Committee, while retaining responsibility for the work of the Association, shall have power to appoint such sub-committees as it may consider desirable and shall specify their terms of reference. Membership of these sub-committees shall not necessarily be confined to the members of the General Committee.
10. The General Committee shall have power to determine all matters not specifically covered by the Constitution and Rules.

## 11. AIPS and UEPS

1. The Association shall affiliate to the Association Internationale de la Press Sportive (AIPS) and the Union European de la Press Sportive (UEPS/AIPS Europe) on behalf of Great Britain.
2. The General Committee shall elect annually the Association's Representative(s) to attend both AIPS and UEPS (AIPS Europe) Congresses.
3. AIPS International Press cards may be issued upon payment of a fee to be determined by the General Committee, to:
  1. Full members – automatically on application
  2. Associate members – subject to the approval of the General Committee.
4. In co-operation with the AIPS and, where appropriate, the specialist sports writers' associations, the Association shall:
  1. Strive for improved facilities and working conditions for sports journalists in the sphere of international competition.
  2. Examine and deal with matters concerning press accreditation.

## 12. DISSOLUTION

If upon the dissolution of the Association there remains after satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities any property shall not be paid to, or be distributed among the members of the Association but shall be applied by the General Committee to the furtherance of any object or objects for which the Association was founded.

## 13. ALTERATION OF RULES

No rule of the Association, contained in this Constitution, shall be altered or rescinded nor any new one made unless 7 days' notice has been given to each member and then only by a two-thirds majority of those present with an entitlement to vote.

Voting at an Annual Meeting or Extraordinary meeting, the Agenda circulated in advance must contain full notice of any alterations proposed. Publication of the agenda on the SJA official website is deemed to constitute publication of any official notices.

## 14. GENERAL

All matters not specifically covered by the Constitution shall be considered by the Officers whose majority decision shall be final.

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### Rules Governing the Association's Awards

1. The Association annually shall make awards to: *[do we still give an award to runners up?]*

1. The SJA Sportsman of the Year and the next two runners-up.
2. The SJA Sportswoman of the Year and the next two runners-up.
3. The SJA Team of the Year to persons who have contributed most in the year to prestige of British sport on the international stage. A team is considered to include partnerships in sports such as tennis doubles, figure skating pairs and ice dance etc as well as specific team sports.
4. The SJA International Newcomer of the Year (the Peter Wilson Trophy). Should there be outstanding female and male candidates, the General Committee would have the right to honour both.
5. The SJA Special Award for outstanding achievement in sport (the Pat Besford Award).
6. The J.L. Manning Award for outstanding services to sport off the field of play.

2. The winners of 1(1), (2) and (3) shall be determined by a poll among full members of the Association who shall vote for:

1. Their top three sportsmen
2. Their top three sportswomen
3. Their top three teams (a team being a unit of two or more persons of both or either sex).

3. The General Committee, after the closing of the poll, shall allocate points in the awards sections of 4pt, 2, 1. Those obtaining the highest number of points shall be declared the winners.

4. The awards for the Peter Wilson Trophy (international newcomer), the Pat Besford special award for outstanding achievement in sport, and the JL Manning award for outstanding services to sport off the field of play shall be decided **after discussion by** the General Committee.

5. There may also, at the discretion of the General Committee, be awarded a Committee Award.

6. The President, at his discretion, may award a President's Award,

7. The Association shall also award, annually, the Bill McGowran Trophy to the outstanding Disabled Sportsman **and** Sportswoman of the Year (this award is normally nominated by Sports Disability Great Britain). **This shall be awarded following consultation with the British Paralympic Association.**

8. The presentations of the above-mentioned awards shall be made at the Association's Annual Dinner or such other function determined by the Annual Meeting.

9. The Annual Meeting or General Committee shall have the power to make any other special awards to individuals or teams for outstanding services to sport. Such special awards may be presented at the Annual Dinner or other appropriate occasion.

10. The Association added the Doug Gardner Award to its impressive collection of trophies in 1991. Perpetuating the memory of our late Secretary, it goes to a **person** nominated by the officers of the Association, who has made an outstanding contribution to sports journalism. **It may also be bestowed on an individual who has made a notable contribution to the SJA.**