



APPOINTING A CLUB CHAIRMAN

Ray Burniston, writes about appointing the chairman.

Secretary At Work: September 2001 *(reviewed October 2011)*

A few clubs' rules allow the members to elect a chairman, but in most cases the usual way is for the committee to select from their number or as in many cases the Captain of the day is made chairman for the year.

Over the past years it has become apparent to many clubs that by having the Captain as Chairman means that each year the club has a change at the top thereby allowing very little continuity. But even if the club does elect or appoint a separate chairman how much effort is made to ensure that the person elected/appointed has the necessary experience to carry out the task? In some cases, members will turn up for the Annual General Meeting and be expected to cast a vote for a candidate who they may not know, or know anything about. Often the candidates will stand up to identify themselves but that is all.

The chairman's role at the club is leading and managing the committee/board and conducting meetings both efficiently and fairly. It is important that the chairman must be fully versed on the agenda for the meeting and that the secretary/manager gives a full brief prior to the meeting. Not only must the chairman be familiar with the minutes of the previous meeting but also with any minutes from sub committees that has taken place. Taking the chair at a committee meeting with perhaps a dozen persons on it is one thing; doing the same thing at the Annual General Meeting with perhaps one hundred or so members present is another. Therefore anyone taking up this position should be made aware that they will have to spend sufficient time keeping themselves fully briefed on club business and be able to conduct a meeting regardless of the numbers present.

Probably the most difficult task is to control the meeting and try to allow sensible discussion on points raised but at the same time see that the meeting does not drag on.

These days many clubs have a job description for the club chairman and a suggested copy can be obtained from the Information Library No.2068. This will vary between clubs and you should ensure that if you produce such a document it reflects your club. It is important that the chairman has some knowledge of the club rules especially those rules that are frequently referred to. Much of this will depend on the secretary giving the chairman a thorough brief for each meeting and covering as many eventualities as you think necessary.

It is important to ensure that any candidates for this position are fully aware of what is involved. It is important that both the role of the chairman and the role of the captain are fully explained. Although the Captain may no longer take the chair at meetings, this person should be the number one during the year.

The chairman will not only support the Captain whenever possible but will never attempt to invade his space. A good club chairman will carry out his tasks and keep very much in the background. In many cases the chairman may well be a past captain so they should know the etiquette. Whether the chairman is voted in at the AGM by the members or voted in by the committee, the person will already be a member of the committee. It is very important that they fully understand the role they are taking on and are able to carry it out. It is little use electing someone who is retired and spends months away at a time on holidays.

The chairman will be responsible for being the person the secretary/manager reports to on all club matters and a good working relationship is essential. These days most clubs conduct an annual performance and salary review of all staff. Much of this will be done by the secretary/manager in conjunction with the different department heads. But in the secretary/manager's case the chairman with perhaps one or two other members of the committee will carry this out.

Overall accepting the position of Club Chairman at a club is a highly responsible one and nobody should be coerced into it without being fully briefed on what is required and the responsibilities that go with it.

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