

Report from Ellen Gordon Tournament Director - Re: GOSFORD GOLD AMT/SILVER JT

- Once entries closed – a request by Ellen was made for ALL emails to be forwarded to Ellen. Didn't happen, caused a lot of hours of unnecessary work in emails/phone calls from players to Ellen to sort out entries.
- After entries closed – some Withdrawals not acted upon by Rob Eldridge and not passed on to Ellen, caused more phone calls/changes to pairings/explanations to players/additional hours of unnecessary work.
- Doubles pairings – again, some not acted upon /not passed on to Ellen. It appears that Rob Eldridge has too many email addresses and you never know which one to use. There was one email displayed for the tournament prior to closing, but some players still didn't receive replies.
- Tennis Balls for the AMT – Ellen asked Rob Eldridge during the Gosford Summer Classic in the last week of December which balls were being used for the Gold AMT. Rob replied he would be guided by Ellen. Ellen replied that the fact sheet showed Wilson AO and that would be the preferred ball by the AMT players. Rob said he would go with that make sure he had Wilson AO balls, so the fact sheet was left showing Wilson AO balls for the AMT. The wrong balls were supplied for AMT event. When Ellen asked Rob where are the Wilson AO balls?, he replied – there are some in the shed, how many do you need as I don't think I have enough for the tournament. Rob claims he sent a text to the Wilson rep but did not get a reply. Gosford did not have enough Wilson AO to last one day. I rang Glenn Knox at Babolat on the 2nd day and he confirmed Rob had ordered Babolat Gold to both events on the Thursday prior to the start of the AMT. There was some story I heard that when the order was placed that it was because I had not ordered the balls! Hence my call to Glenn Knox who clarified the story as untrue and that Rob was ordering balls for both tournaments.
- No singles sticks out for Day 1 at Gosford despite an email 3 days earlier from the Referee to Rob Eldridge requesting they be available.
- No singles sticks available at Wyong at all.
- Total lack of organisation at Gosford for pre-tournament set up.
- Accommodation: The Referee, who was arriving at Gosford on Monday afternoon, rang the Ibis on Monday morning to check on the accommodation only to be told nothing had been booked for him, the TD or officials! The TD had been assured by Rob Eldridge that the accommodation had been booked the week before. The Referee contacted Roxanne Wain who assisted in sorting the accommodation. On the Tuesday when Darren Nash, court supervisor, tried to check in at the Ibis it was discovered there had been a mix up for Darren Nash and myself which was the fault of Ibis, not Gosford. They booked us in under room numbers instead of our names!
- No tournament office – use counter along with site staff selling drinks ice creams coffees etc. This was horrendous, sitting on a metal stool on/off for hours with knees stuck up against a cupboard. With some parents/players wanting to pay the TD for ice creams and order coffees!
- Working environment for TD and referee not suitable – noise/people/surrounds.
- Request for a table prior to the tournament to relocate TD ignored until Day 3 when TD asked a staff member for a table and set it up herself and got a chair from the office. A table was set up for the collection of entry fees the day before the TD finally had a table set up!

- At one point on the 2nd day of the tournament, as TD, I was so annoyed at the level of incompetence I was ready to hand the tournament back to Rob Eldridge and leave. I had also spoken to Roxanne Wain later in the day and mentioned my dissatisfaction and frustration to her – hence this report to NSW Tournaments. However, I did not leave as I had made a commitment to the tournaments and I would not let the players, rest of Gosford committee, Referee and Officials down.
- Emails not forwarded by Rob Eldridge, General Manager, to TD in a timely way.
- TD having to generate an invoice for New Caledonian players entry fees as Rob Eldridge asked for help with Rob Eldridge acknowledging the TD was busy with the tournament. When the TD said he could check on his computer as he had the file, he replied he was also very busy and would like some help. 6 players was all he needed to look up! It appears he couldn't add up 6 x \$90 plus 3 x \$70 – all in his files. Collecting payments was General Managers responsibility. This was made clear prior to the start of the tournament. Not sure he has even looked at the 2017 TA Australian Ranking Tournament Rules & Regs let alone 2018 – he would then have a better understanding of what the roles and responsibilities are and what the venue requirements should be.
- Despite requests, Katrina(Lower Courts TD), had to blow leaves of bottom courts with blower costing event one half hour on bottom courts which ended up with a few matches needing to be transferred to the top venue due to loss of light.
- Still doing withdrawals 9.30pm Tuesday night for the JT which started Wednesday morning.
- JT entry fee debacle – could not even collect majority of entries – missed approx. 26 entries despite Ellen downloading match entry cards, emailing them to Rob Eldridge 5 days before the JT started, showing all players details and events to be used as an invoice/receipt for players as they checked in. Ellen also suggested to Rob he send an email to all players entered in the JT to advise them that payments would need to be made prior to first matches – didn't happen. A committee member came in the day before the JT started to organise payments as Rob still had not put a collection plan/process into place. Fortunately it was AMT Qualifying day with the match load not too onerous as Ellen then had to print off 3 copies of the entry match cards for volunteers/staff to collate and set up as a system to collect entry fees over the next 2 days. This could have been done days before. Unfortunately, Rob, as general manager, once again floundered in his decision making regarding this important matter.
- Wrong score recorded in doubles on lower courts – caused problems – first time staff member filling in as TD remarked – “this is a piece of cake”. Turns out it wasn't!
- Wrong singles match played on lower courts – again caused problems – not following systems, working off paper, not the program. If they had worked from the screen it would not have happened as TP would not have had this match on screen. Fortunately we were able to sort it.
- Running 2 events simultaneously – usually not a problem at other venues. However, Rob Eldridge obviously struggled to see what was involved to run these tournaments effectively.
- Ringing junior members and staff at 11.30pm the night before to see if they could work the next day did not make some parents very happy.
- A parent came to me and commented that Rob had approached him to see if his son would like to leave his current coach in the area and train at Gosford – very unprofessional.

- Coffee machine – extremely noisy and in close proximity to TD and desk making it very hard to hear players.
- Table tennis area not supervised by parents and/or staff. TD and Referee spoke to the players a number of times to lessen the noise. The excessive noise made it extremely difficult to work, even with the door shut.
- Friday social players turned up to play – obviously not communicated with.
- General court hirers also turned up showing they had booked courts online. Rob Eldridge had forgotten to block the online booking function for the tournament.
- Referee and Court Supervisor had to repair nets on the lower courts. Nets etc should have been checked prior to the start of the tournament.
- Rob Eldridge rang Noel Dodds at 11.30pm 25th January asking him if he could be on site for restrings on 26th Jan for a potential 16 hour day! Noel said there must be a lot of racquets to restring, Rob replied there were only about 4 but he needed someone all day. Noel came and did the 4 or 5, stayed for a few hours and then left.
- Rob Eldridge clearly demonstrated to me he struggles to prioritise what needs to be done, he is easily distracted leading to tasks not being completed in a timely manner or not at all. Eg. Request for a separate table for the TD, forwarding vital emails pertaining to tournament entries, ordering correct tennis balls, organising staff, formulating a procedure for collecting entry fees. Rob has no understanding of the requirements of a tournament – when Dave Allen and I looked at the entry numbers for the JT it was clear another venue would be required. Rob said Wyoming were available with 4 grass courts and then Woy Woy with 3 syn grass & 3 hard court. Dave and I said that would put extra strain on officials and staff and that 10 grass at Wyong would be the best option as one extra venue was easier to man and it minimised travel between venues for 2 players, the rest would all be at the one venue. Rob was not happy with this but went along with it suggesting we put the AMT & 18/U players at Wyong! Both the Referee and I said this would not be appropriate as the AMT started on hard court at Gosford. Putting the 12/U & 14/U Girls at Wyong was most successful and the feedback from the players and parents re the venue was good.
- When anyone asks where Rob is, even staff shrugged their shoulders most times and said they weren't sure where he was – 'he's around somewhere'.
- TD asked Rob for his match plan prior to the start of the tournament. Never received it. Had to ask Tennis NSW, who sent it straight through. The tournament entries did not reflect what was in the match plan. Again in December, Ellen asked Rob about draw sizes resulting in the juniors all being 64 Qualifying/32 Main draw for Singles. Nothing like the proposal on the match plan. Hence the Referee and TD insisted Wyong with 10 courts be added, which worked ok.
- I would seriously recommend that any future tournaments at Gosford should be administered by whoever the TD is from when entries open to the finish of the tournament to avoid the unnecessary 30 hours plus of pre-tournament work I had to put in to 'clean up' the entries due to not all emails being forwarded. Unfortunately, replying to emails, phone calls and texts appears not to be one of Rob's strengths. To be a TD this is a vital component of the job, as is regular publishing of the online entries, especially in the last 5 days before entries close – not 2 weeks.

- I finished as TD on the last day of the AMT which was the second last day of the JT as I had 2018 Port Stephens AMT starting on the 27th January. All that was left to play on the last day were 48 matches for the JT – semis and finals. Had to send Rob a text at 3pm to publish the tournament. Rob Eldridge acknowledged he would do this straight way and had to ask the Referee how to publish. The file was finally published at 3.07pm for the first time that day. During the tournaments the updates had occurred regularly every 60/90 minutes.
- I am always happy to assist with tournaments and enjoy my role as a TD, but on this occasion the job was made unnecessarily difficult and pre-tournament overly time consuming .
- It is with regret that I have to say due to Rob Eldridge's lack of organisational skills, I would be most reluctant to work at a Gosford tournament again if he was to be involved.
- On the last day Rob Eldridge commented to Steve Gibson that he felt he had been locked out of 'his' tournament. Based on the lead up and after the experiences by the Referee and the TD of the first 2 days, unfortunately, Rob was more of a hindrance than a help and for the tournament to proceed smoothly there was no option except for the Referee and TD to take control of the event. Rob was left to manage the collection of staff, fees and financial matters pertaining to the tournaments. He appeared to struggle with these tasks anyway.

Please feel free to contact me on 0414 874 534 to discuss any of the matters pertaining to this report.

Regards,

Ellen Gordon

30/1/2018