

**Governance**

**Action Taken**

- The Articles of Association have been amended by the Board for ratification in whole or part at the AGM on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012.
- The website is updated more frequently by using a dedicated officer.
- Tesni Evans and Peter Creed are climbing the World Rankings and Deon Saffrey has just been awarded Elite Cymru funding.
- Excellence Squads were changed to Academy Squads in December 2011, following the pattern of the successful Training Night mixed groupings. There are three Academies in South Wales i.e. Tuesday 5-6pm; Tuesday 6-8pm; Wednesday 6-8pm. The first 2 squads are coached by Greg Tippings, Chris Rees, Chris Powell, Dave Howe and Jonathan Jones. These pilot squads were received well by players, parents and coaches, so were repeated in February half term and will be kept in place for the season.
- School visits now expanded to infant's schools because children aged 5-7 are capable of learning racket skills.
- A proposal to have U23 Test Matches was put to the Home countries and rejected because the B Internationals fulfil this category (Scotland & England).

**Future Plans**

Squash Wales plan to recruit an Operations Manager from September 2012 – their main areas of responsibility will be:

- Undertake a review of existing policies and procedures to confirm that all necessary policies and procedures are in existence
- Update policies and procedures as necessary including confirming that, where appropriate, they comply with legal requirements
- Draw up and implement new policies and procedures where gaps have been identified
- Deal with alleged violations of rules, regulations, policies, procedures and codes of conduct
- Identify areas of vulnerability and risk and develop/implement corrective action plans
- Develop an effective compliance training programme, including appropriate introductory training for new employees and contractors as well as ongoing training for existing employees and contractors
- General administration tasks and operational reporting requirements associated with the role

**Development**

**Action Taken**

- Development Events have been redesigned to one day events with U7-U10 from 10am to 1pm and U11-U14 from 2pm to 5pm. Categories are more flexible and more ability based than age based.
- SQW are trialing Junior team leagues in West Wales with the format being 4 players to a team, including at least one girl and one under 11. Nine teams have competed from Porthcawl in the East to Carmarthen in the West. Orange ball team events are also played in the West with all players being under 11 years of age. These events focus on team play rather than individual performance i.e, most consistent number of forehands, most number of backhands and most number of accurate shots. These three events foster team contribution rather than the individual. The final event is an introduction to knockout/tournament play. We plan to roll out a similar junior league in North Wales next season.
- Sponsors are scarce but Lasers R Us, Tiny Tumblers, Celtic Waste Management and Strachan Travel sponsored the Welsh Junior Open. Pointfore and Dunlop continue to sponsor SQW.

- County Closed dates and National Squad dates were separated.
- Proposal for combining Gwent, Mid and South Glam players into one representational team was accepted in principal by the three counties. The selection proposals are with the High Performance Coaches for ratification. Players will make themselves available by notifying Squash Wales. The players will be ranked into merit by the 4 HPCs, allowing a squad of 8 per team. Squash Wales will enter the team/s into the English ICs. Each county will pay pro rata per number of players in each team squad. Costs will include the entry fee, travel and accommodation.
- North East Wales RDO appointed to introduce squash into schools in Flintshire and Denbighshire.
- South Wales U13G, U17G have reached the finals of the English IC Championships and U13B team has reached the Trophy Finals.
- Radio Wales featured the Welsh Junior Open on the Jamie and Louise morning programme before and after the event thus raising our profile through the media. Also had a telephone interview to promote/advertise Welsh juniors travelling to the English Inter-Counties.
- Introduced new rules for those players who drop out during tournaments. To avoid incurring 3 penalty points as part of the Conduct and Disciplinary System, players must notify the Tournament Director immediately and provide a medical certificate.
- Two Racketball Development Officers have been appointed; Clair Miles Owen will cover Mid and North Wales, Damian Burgess will cover South Wales. They have held successful taster days in Brecon and Newport.
- Match times have been posted instead of full draws and have been well received. Full draws are placed on the website on the morning of the first day of the event. This prevents players dropping out when they see their opponent. Also allows draws to be amended due to pre-event pull outs without persistently changing the website.

### **Future Plans**

- Introduce a parent friendly leaflet for the 2012/2013 season explaining tournament and ranking rules for juniors and senior players.
- Introduce Mid and South Glam Junior Leagues in September 2012 as a stepping stone towards senior leagues. Level 1 will be for mixed teams of 3 players at beginner ability. Level 2 will be for intermediate players and Level 3 advanced. Byron Lloyd Lewis will coordinate the leagues to replicate the senior leagues. Teams will meet once a month in one venue. Damian Burgess will organise similar leagues in Gwent and Hugh Griffiths will do the same in the West. Teams will be promoted/demoted at the end of each half of the season and there will be an Inter-County Event at each half. T-shirts and trophies for all competitors.
- Squash Wales has secured a LAPA with the Vale of Glamorgan Council to start junior squash in Barry and Penarth LCs. The £4360 includes coach education, junior equipment, school visits, coach fees and court fees.
- Canvass changing the WJO date to later in the season (May/September) to attract more European/World entries.

## **Coaching**

### **Action Taken**

- SLUK – Squash Wales has completed a partnership contract with Sports Leaders UK to introduce a new Leaders Award as a squash specific bolt on module 3 to the generic SLUK award. The course (written by CR) has been ratified and will be launched on 2<sup>nd</sup> April in SWNC. Sport Wales has underwritten any losses in the first year and paid SLUK for the set up of this award. SLUK will make its large database available and advertise our specific award to those leaders who already have modules 1/2.
- The cost of UKCC coaching awards is prohibitive especially with the depressed economic climate. There may be more people available, due to job losses and redundancies, but people are reluctant to commit because of fear of debt. This makes Community Chest grants (max £1500)

even more important to secure funding for coach education. Squash Wales has helped clubs and leisure centres to apply for CCs. From April 2011 to date, 24 clubs in South Wales, 4 North Wales clubs have received £1500 towards equipment, coach education and schools/junior programmes.

- There is always a demand for more coaches, but the principal of “Fast Tracking” can be a double edged sword. The coaches who have patiently gone through the levels may be upset at a colleague being fast tracked through the levels. It is difficult to be sure that the person being fast tracked is capable of accelerated education.

### **Future Plans**

- Have formed a partnership with Glamorgan University and been accredited as part of the new Coaching Degree, starting in September 2013. Squash Wales will deliver UKCC Level 1 & 2 Courses during the three years of the degree.
- This partnership has already resulted in delivering squash and racketball classes to 3<sup>rd</sup> year students of the Sports Science Degree.
- Extend SLUK Module 3 to Racketball. SLUK has agreed to an extra module and Sport Wales will cover losses as per original contract.
- Have organised a Level 2 in August holidays 11<sup>th</sup> and 12th, as requested.
- Have formed a partnership with Westward Community Centre to pilot Mini Squash in communities. Many Local Authorities are transferring sport from school to community based.
- Train racketball tutors and coaches in July 2012.

### **Media Update**

- A constant stream of Welsh and regional news items are placed on the website bringing to life all squash activities throughout Wales.
- We now have 556 followers on Facebook, we had 62,542 post views on Facebook and 747 people feedback to us with comments. We have 641 monthly active users.
- On Twitter we have 312 followers, 24 new users this month. We had 211 tweets this month and 42 of our tweets were re-tweeted by other users.
- On youtube we have 41 subscribers and over 70 vids
- Squash Site has featured SQW tournaments with photographs.
- BBC RADIO WALES featured a 30 minute interview pre Welsh Junior Open with SQW and a young player. Promoted the WJO and the mini squash schools project.
- SPORTING WALES – a photo shoot has taken place with Tesni during a senior national squad, the interview will follow and will feature in next edition
- SPORTING WALES have also spoken about featuring Peter Creed in an issue this year
- WALES AND WEST MEDIA starting to feature more of SQW activities.
- LIVE streaming has been a success in competitions and in the men’s South Wales Premier League. This can be improved with more up to date equipment and education of the clubs to free up a good camera position. With the inclusion of recording matches many hits are happening after the events and at the WJO we were downloading them to a CD for a charge.
- In 2013 SQW would like to have the website updated more often with the introduction of a new website, more stories from more counties and clubs adding to the flavour of the website as we travel through the squash season. More events again taking the total of senior optional events to 6 resulting in more competition for different clubs and players regionally and nationally.
- Also we plan to introduce racketball events to the competition calendar and market the sport to more people than ever.

## **Back to Basics Summary**

### **Senior Compulsory Events**

- This season we have introduced 3 compulsory events throughout Wales, North Wales, Newport and Welsh Closed in Cardiff. These have proved to be very popular due to the increasing numbers entering. The matches at these events have also been of a high standard and very competitive as all the players are aware these results are being noted.
- Moving forward discussions are already taking place exploring the possibility of increasing to 4 compulsory events by adding a Welsh Open which will give all Welsh senior players a good range of domestic events to play.

### **Transitional/Under 23 Squads**

- This is an area we at Squash Wales have talked long and hard about. We were losing many players in this age group and wanted to put a stop to this. We have introduced 4 weekend squads, 2 in North Wales and 2 in South Wales. These squads have been very well attended and proved to be very popular with all the players.
- We have also introduced Under 23 age groups in our junior compulsory events. Although the numbers at these events are low we are going to persevere with this. The reason they are slightly low is that many of the players at this squad are younger and have their own age group to attend.
- Finding dates for the squads proved to be difficult at such a late stage with the SQW calendar already in circulation however clashes were kept to a minimum.

### **Senior Squads**

- After a period where there were no senior national squads SQW introduced 4 weekend mixed squads. Due to professional commitments by the players the first squad was cancelled, we decided to run with 3 squads. Going forward the squads have been well attended.
- This is a new beginning for the senior players in Wales and a commitment criteria was introduced and communicated to all players in person and placed on the website. SQW goal was to encourage the players involved to “buy into” our ethos having pride and passion when representing Wales.
- Moving into the 2013 season we plan to plot the dates and communicate them to all stakeholders as soon as possible. Players can put them in the diary at an early stage. We must make sure that the squads do not clash with any other events.

### **Senior Training Nights**

- After meeting all the senior players and listening to the feedback at the Focus Group meeting we introduced weekly training nights for senior players in February. These sessions are not compulsory to attend and provide an elite training environment for all these players. While these sessions should continue the turn out at these sessions has been rather poor especially as so many of the senior players expressed their desire to have them. Due to the small turnout in these sessions the daily training environment that was suggested at the Focus Group meeting would not work at present.

### **Commonwealth Games Doubles**

- We are at the final stages of completing the 3 year doubles plan for the Commonwealth Games 2014. This area was discussed at the Focus Group meeting and it is an area we are taking seriously.
- We have met with the Sports Council and have gained funding for year 1 of 3. We need to start the plan in June/July 2012 and compete in Doubles Test matches along with taking pairings to the World doubles event.

### **One to One Coaching**

- This is another area we have added since the Focus Group meeting. This enables David Evans, the High Performance Coach for the senior programme, to deliver personal sessions with our three professional players but also the Under 23 players. It allows the players an extra session per week to help bridge the gap from junior to senior.

### **High Performance Coaches**

- The four HPCs are closely involved and working together delivering the 'back to basics' coaching programmes which has had a positive impact and that will only grow and will be of great importance for the future. There is a lot of knowledge, expertise and experience and pooling this will undoubtedly be a great support for the players and the country as a whole. Also there is a togetherness growing with the close involvement of all which is important if we want to continue achieving and punching above our weight as a small country in comparison to bigger squash nations.

### **Simon Harling**

- Develop a Physical Performance Plan (PPP) for Squash Wales: Essentially, the PPP provides the framework from which we provide our physical training recommendations. It acts as a resource to coaches and players. For example, if a coach would like to know how many training sessions in a week his/her player should ideally complete this information is provided within the PPP.
- Provide a physical fitness testing schedule across the different age groups: Each age group has a different set of physical fitness tests suitable for their physical developmental needs.
- Establish a physical fitness test scoring system: For each age group players depending on their performance on a physical fitness test players are scored 1-5 for that particular test. Scoring 1 suggests that player has some work to do in terms of their performance. In contrast, scoring 5 suggests the player is above average. This system is useful for two reasons: Firstly, it allows us a comparison across other sports as the scores are derived from research on that particular test where possible. So, the same player who scores 5 on our scoring system on the bleep test for example would also be above average in many sporting populations for that age group. Secondly, it simplifies the physical fitness test results.
- Develop a way of monitoring players training habits: A mechanism using training diaries was developed. Players are asked to complete monthly training diaries which are submitted to their High Performance Age Group coach. This allows us the ability to monitor the type and frequency of training sessions completed. The training diaries also allow us to "nudge" players behaviour. For example, we are now able to let the players know the average number of training sessions completed by their peers.
- Create a Performance based environment: Successful players have well established routines which allow them to perform at their best. For example, something as simple as a warm up routine which we all take for granted actually needs to be developed from an early age. Through educational meetings, reinforcement at National Squads and Training nights we look at establishing habits of a successful player.

### **Future Plans**

- As we collect the information from physical fitness testing and racket skill tests we need to use that information to help identify what makes a successful player and more importantly what makes a successful senior player.
- Individualised Training: We have just started to identify players we believe have got a chance to develop further physically with greater individualised input.
- Working as a team: In the two years Simon Harling has been involved with Squash Wales we lost our Performance Director (National Coach), Chris Robertson and began a structure of High Performance Coaches for the age groups. We are only now beginning to work as a team and work together to achieve our goals. Over the next few years we expect to change our way of working significantly in order to achieve a better performance environment

## Referee Programme

- The Focus Group highlighted the need to improve the knowledge by educating and supporting juniors, increase their confidence for when they are required to take charge of matches. The need to improve the standard of refereeing in clubs and mentor referees who want to progress was also a priority.
- This year we have focused on the role of the Referee Coordinator ensuring we offered more education/mentoring and generally having greater presence at SQW national tournaments. The number of courses and attendees is high covering all regions of Wales with a good rate of attendees turning up at tournaments for assessment.
- To cover the needs of the junior players we have provided both North and South Excellence (Academy) squads with referee courses and followed up with assessor attendance at every SQW Junior event.
- To facilitate mentoring the referee coordinator attended most Squash Wales events to enable World Referee Roy Gingell to mentor our County Grade referees and as a result we have one of our new referees, Huw Moores representing Wales at the European Team Championships this year.
- We have dedicated the Saturdays of all tournaments to assessments, this has been communicated to all referee course attendees and all stakeholders within the sport.
- We have increased referee attendance at SQW events and this has worked very well from an assessment and mentoring perspective. Following the high number of people attending courses we have had a good percentage follow up this by attending tournaments to be assessed with a significant number passing. This has improved the numbers of registered referees in clubs.
- Having a mentoring program in place is giving interested people an opportunity to develop and a clear guide on what they should be doing to develop further. Over time this will hopefully see a number of referees progress above County grade and fill the void left by our older, more experienced referees retiring.
- 2013 will focus more on going to the clubs and educating the masses through courses and workshops. This will provide greater opportunities for junior players to attend and become educated. It will instill some knowledge and hopefully confidence to mark effectively when they are called upon during Junior Tournaments.