

Warwickshire Squash 2019/20

Section Reports

Chairman's Report – Nigel Orett

I hope clubs are beginning to settle in and appreciate that it will be a long and difficult road. REMEMBER we are here to help so feel free to contact CHRIS HALL or myself for advice and support. It has been necessary to cancel the AGM scheduled for September but hope that we will be able to meet in the New Year to plan the way forward. The League Secretary will be sharing his thoughts with you in his report.

I am pleased to welcome Ming Lee on to the Committee and he will also share his thoughts on the "Way Forward " to the Commonwealth Games. My thanks to all the Committee who continue to work on your behalf behind the scenes in these difficult times

Please free to share concerns, ideas and examples of good practice in these next critical few weeks.

Kind Regards Nigel Orrett
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Juniors – Chris Evans

1. Organisational

- a. There has not been a Junior Committee for a number of years. One of the first tasks will be to form a proper Committee, able to develop and sustain an enhanced junior squash programme within the County. The posts of Chair and Treasurer have already been filled. Other posts have yet to be filled such as Schools Liaison Officer, Coaching Co-Ordinator, Parental Liaison Officer and Media Officer.
- b. The first action will be to recruit the other Committee members, this will be by personal invitation.
- c. The next step will be to convene the first Committee meeting. At this meeting the key task will be to discuss this document, make any necessary changes and then adopt the document as policy.

2. Financial

- a. The current financial position is quite strong. The Junior section has its own bank account and manages its own finances. The bank mandate is currently being transferred to the new Committee members. Funds are currently £1250 in credit with a further £2000 due from the main Warwickshire account. The main Committee (of which the Junior Chair is a member) currently funds the junior section to the tune of £2000 per annum and is committed to fund further amounts on an ad hoc basis if the need can be demonstrated.
- b. Current costs are minimal – County shirts for tournaments are funded by a sponsor and coaching days tend to generate a small profit.
- c. The objective will be to increase reserves to £5000 by the end of 2021. This will be done through the following activities:
 - i. Increased number to county coaching days
 - ii. A wider range of sponsors

3. Schools

- a. Currently, there does not appear to be a great deal of activity with schools. The greatest success has been Jason Pike, Head Coach at Leamington Spa. The County is in the middle of conducting a far-reaching survey into club activities. Results should be available in early April – this will help to inform action points.
- b. It is difficult for schools to incorporate squash into the general curriculum due to class numbers. A class of 30 requires a minimum of 6 courts in order to be coached effectively, added to the cost of coaching, equipment and transportation to the venue.
- c. One possible entry route for squash into schools is to use the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Squash can be used to comply with the "physical activity" module or the "learning a new skill" module. Since pupils have a number of options, take up is usually lower with 6-10 pupils following a 6 week development programme.
- d. The first action point will be to appoint a schools liaison officer. Next they will make contact with senior schools in close proximity to a club and contact the

teacher heading up the DofE programme. Once squash is nominated as an option for the cohort, they will match a coach with the school who will take over liaison with the school to implement the programme.

4. Competitions & Events

- a. The key competitions for juniors in the County are:
 - i. Inter Counties
 - ii. County Closed
 - iii. Regional Closed
 - iv. Graded events (Copper, Bronze, Silver, Gold)
- b. The main issue with 1-3 (above) is that some of the better juniors choose not to play in the events. The reasons for this are unclear, although anecdotally reasons cited have been:
 - i. No ranking points
 - ii. No chance of winning as other team members are weaker
 - iii. Needing a break from tournament play
- c. The first action will be to find out the reasons why this is happening. If all counties in the ICC start to field weaker teams, then the integrity and prestige of the tournament will be diminished over time. The same is true of the closed events.
- d. Once the reasons have been ascertained, we will determine a strategy to motivate our top juniors to turn out for the County events.
- e. We will also look to restart the Grand Prix series for those juniors who have little or no experience of playing competitive squash.

5. Lack of Continuity of County Commitment

- a. It is noticeable that some juniors will play for a few years and will then drop out of county play. This is often due to the fact that they will be competitive in a particular age group, e.g. U13s, then they will have their 13th birthday and will move into the U15s where they will not be competitive. If they stay with the County programme they will once again become competitive as they turn 14. The challenge will be to retain their interest during the relatively uncompetitive period.
- b. The first action will be to try to anticipate by collating a database from the ES website and supplementing it with data from clubs. Knowing dates of birth will enable us to plan ahead.
- c. The next step will be to actively include this group in the County training programmes and try to include in "B" teams at ICC and also to arrange friendlies with other counties. These actions will help to keep the cohort together.

6. Coaching

- a. As a County, we are fortunate to have a number of high-quality coaches available. These are supported by a large number of level 2 and level 1 coaches.
- b. In the past, county coaching has usually been carried out on an ad hoc basis by specific coaches and held at specific venues.

- c. Moving forward the plan will be to have a junior coaching co-ordinator, heading up a group of coaches who will be responsible for specific age groups. For example, a coach may be responsible for Boys U11 & U13, Girls U15 & U17 and so on. This keeps the age groups tight and allows the coach to see them through 4 years. U19 will be treated separately as they have specific issues regarding continuation and involvement. The main coach will be supported by lower level coaches, with specific emphasis on the involvement of younger coaches which will have the effect of making the coaches relatable to the juniors and will also allow the younger coaches to learn from the senior coaches.

7. Junior Programmes

- a. All of the major clubs have well established junior programmes, including regular individual and group sessions, internal tournaments and entry into ES events.
- b. The plan will be to start more junior sessions at other clubs that, at the moment, do not have a junior programme. This will be done by making contact with the club officials, discussing current junior membership and then contacting a local coach to run the programme.

Ladies – Leonie Holt

The Ladies season started with the best laid plans but most of this was unfortunately scuppered by the COVID. We had teams entered in to the age groups and the senior championships with a lot of strong players due to be involved.

The strength of Ladies squash within Warwickshire was highlighted at our first training session of the year where around 20 women turned up, all of whom had expressed interest in playing county squash or were already involved in teams. This session involved a morning of routines and games followed by drinks and food in the bar at Leamington Squash Club. We had Jason Pike take the training session and the idea was to have approximately 4 of these sessions a year at different clubs around the county using the club coach for each session.

Before we could plan another session or play any County Squash the country went in to lockdown and that basically brings us to now. I am hoping that players have stayed involved in any activities their clubs put on remotely during the closures and have kept up their fitness even if they haven't yet returned to the courts.

I am looking forward to it becoming safe to play competitively again in the near future so that the County squash can pick up again, as I am sure everybody else is.

Competitions and Events – Mo Sarwar

Senior Intercounty Competitions

Unfortunately, we have been living through some strange times over the last few months. Like all other sports competitions being abandoned/postponed, squash was no exception and all intercounty competitions were cancelled due to the COVID-19 situation. Some were cancelled with only a few days' notice. I know all team captains had put a lot of effort into organising their respective squads and ensuring their players were in good shape for the weekend of 28/29 March. Some had even organised very intensive training sessions (mainly in the club bar and a local curry house) to get players psyched up for the intercounty weekend. Sadly, it was not meant to be. Hence there are no team performance reports this year, but we shall stay in training for next year.

Events

- Junior county closed hosted by C&NWSC at short notice. Over 70 entries.
- RB closed hosted by C&NWSC – Only 19 players supported the event.
- County Senior Closed hosted by Leamington LT&SC. 78 entries.

Development and Safeguarding – Mo Sarwar

Coach Development.

Since April 2019 we have supported and developed coaches by organising.

- 1 x Young Leaders Award for 7 delegates
- 2 x L1 courses for app. 20 delegates
- 2 x safeguarding workshops for 24 coaches
- 1 x 1st Aid course for 10 coaches

Safeguarding.

No safeguarding issues have been brought to the attention of Warwickshire Squash over the last 12 months. We are happy to provide awareness training around this area for club volunteers/parents if requested.

The Future

In early 2020 the county undertook a comprehensive survey amongst our affiliated clubs. The aim was to obtain current contact details for all clubs, along with collecting a wide range of information. A copy of the results can be found on the Warwickshire Squash website.

The feedback section provided valuable information across a few areas, including coaching, county tournaments, club support and other constructive suggestions.

One highlight was the need to support some of our coaches with the necessary prerequisites (DBS, first aid, safeguarding etc) to become fully licenced and therefore insured through England Squash. Another important finding was the correlation between the clubs with high membership numbers and those clubs being the ones offering frequent beginner courses.

In September, we were hoping to organise a coaches' day that would consist of a 1st Aid Course and a Safeguarding & Protecting Children Workshop, 2 key pre-requisites that coaches need to be fully licensed. Unfortunately, due to the impact of covid-19 it has not been possible to hold this day yet,

We are hoping that these coach development days (1 or 2 per year) will become regular events in the future where coaches from the county could interact, share best practices, and remain current with their qualifications.

Warwickshire Leagues – Roger More

The Corona virus has obviously prevented us holding a summer league for 2020 and it's highly unlikely that any formal league structure will be possible for 2020/21 but we shall react swiftly when restrictions are lifted to examine how any team competition is possible. We shall liaise with clubs to see if a shorter league structure is possible or round robin competitions or cup events when any restrictions are lifted. I have asked before, to ensure that you have updated your club contact details on the system to allow us to discuss options when we need to.

In view of the recent lockdown in parts of Warwickshire we have no realistic chance of starting a league this side of Christmas.

There might be the chance to hold some impromptu matches between clubs or interested individuals with a club happy to host a one-off event.

Winter leagues 2019/20.

The main squash league was finished and here is a brief summary.

Division	Winners	
1.	Solihull Arden 1.	(7 points ahead of Edgbaston Priory 1)
2.	Barnt Green 1.	(19 points ahead of Edgbaston Priory 2)
3.	Warwick University 1.	(7 points ahead of Kings Heath 1)
4.	Knowle 1.	(2 points ahead of Wolverhampton 2)
5.	Birmingham University 3.	(5 points ahead of Solihull Arden 4)
6.	Edgbaston Priory 5.	(9 points ahead of Leamington 5)
7.	Leamington 6.	(11 points ahead of Cleaver 3)

Racketball

Division 1 saw Kenilworth on 209 points and Cleaver on 160 with two matches to play and only able to get a maximum of 28 points so Kenilworth can be declared as winners.

Division 2 saw Edgbaston Priory on 161 with Ardencote Manor Hotel on 131 and a maximum of 14 points possible so Edgbaston Priory can be declared as winners.

The ladies league can't be resolved as it is possible for the leading team in both divisions to be overtaken and a decision had already been agreed between the teams to play the outstanding matches when restrictions are lifted.