



ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Presented to Shropshire Squash AGM – 7th September 2017

I am pleased to once again present the Chairman's Annual Report. I would like to start by advising that Andrew Birks has moved across the water to Canada and has therefore vacated the position of Junior development officer. Andy held the position for a few years and improved the county Junior standard and last year we were able to enter two county junior teams for the first time in many years which was great to see, I would like to thank Andy for his time and effort and wish him well in his next chapter

It has been another busy 12 months for the county. I am pleased that we have maintained a high number of teams in the leagues and also that the change in competition format enabled a good turn-out for most of the tournaments.

County League / Competitions: We again ran 3 squash leagues and a squash 57 (Racketball) league and continued the principal of fixed nights for all Divisions which continues to work well. SportyHQ was used for the first time to run the leagues and county competitions with good success and feedback and will continue next season. The League Knock Out Cup Competition again went well with minimal issues. We again ran the Junior Squash County Closed in September, Senior Squash County Closed during December and January and the squash 57 (Racketball) County Closed in May.

Congratulations to all of our League and Cup Winners and Runners-up. **There is a complete list of the winners and runners available to download from the website but I will pick out a few mentions.**

Club Seven2 retained the division 1 title on the final week of the season. **Llanfyllin B** won the Division 2 title, **Llanfyllin C** won the Division 3 Title and **Shrewsbury SRC B** won the Racketball league title.

Club Knock-out another successful competition with **Wolverhampton** winning the A Cup for the first time. **Llanfyllin** won the B Cup and also completed the double, **Kingsland SRC E** won the C Cup and **Wolverhampton** won the Squash 57(Racketball) Cup. The finals were held on a single evening this season which was a great success. Thank you to Kingsland SRC for hosting the finals evening.

County Closed Senior / Aged Successfully managed by the competitions committee this year. Congratulations to **Barry Talbot** for retaining the title, beating Eddie Prust in an entertaining final. **Barry Talbot** again retained the over 35s title for a fifth year beating Eddie Prust. **Merv Davies** retained the O45s title, and **Gary Westwood** won the Mens O55s title. Cheryl Evans won the ladies championship returning after the recent birth of her daughter. The standard was high again this year with a lot of tough matches

throughout the tournament. Well done and thank you to all the participants and to Kingsland SRC for hosting the event. Without your involvement and assistance these competitions cannot be run.

Junior County Closed - We had a 48 Entrants this season which was an increase on the previous season. Luke Bywater continued his dominance in the boy's events winning the U17s title again, with Emily Powell winning the girls U17 title. This year it was successfully organised and managed by our Junior Development Officer, Andy Birks. We will be looking to increase participation this year. Well done and thank you to all the participants and to Shrewsbury School and Kingsland SRC for hosting the event.

England Squash (ES) Inter-County Championship: The County supported 7 senior teams in various sections of the Inter County Championships and we also supported 2 junior teams. The Senior squad was as competitive as usual but the loss of Andy Birks made it a very tough task. In all other 'age' groups all teams have held their own during a very competitive season, with no other relegation or promotions. The 2 junior teams did a great job on the debut with the U17s finishing XXX and the U15s finishing XXX.

Looking forward to 2016/17:

Leagues:- Don has already completed and published the Squash league structure for the coming season with the first matches due to be played XXX. We have 29 squash teams across 3 divisions and 7 squash 57 (racketball) teams in a single division. Player numbers in each team / division will be maintained this season. Don will be issuing the final bits of information to the captains shortly. All dates for county events are noted in the calendar available on the website. All team contacts, match times and club information is be available through the league website, it is the club's responsibility to keep this information up to date and to ensure the correct match start time is confirmed, so if you have not done so please can all club page administrators urgently complete this information on your Sportyhq league website club page. Please also note that all players need to be registered prior to the first match and that team playing orders should be published at least 1hr prior to each match.

League fees will continue to be increased, on an annual basis, as discussed and agreed at previous AGMs, whilst this is not a significant increase it helps us to provide the funding for the inter county teams and junior county development. Please ensure you pay your fees promptly, late payment penalties will be applied. Please contact Barry Talbot if you have any issues.

Also, please ensure you don't forget to pay the ES Affiliation Fees. Teams will be withdrawn from the league if England Squash (ES) affiliation is not current by 31st October and / or our league fees have not been paid. We have current live data on all received payments and player affiliations via the new ES website county portal, so we know who has not paid!! Please pay your fees promptly. I have also noticed there is a lack of Junior members noted on the list, it is essential that all junior members are included as they will need this information to enter any tournaments and to register any ranking points.

County Closed Competitions:- The sub-committee was created last season as a mechanism to organise and run the county competition due to the lack of a competitions secretary on the committee. The sub-committee was to be chaired by Graham Moore (KSRC). Graham & KSRC did a sterling job in running both the Junior and Senior closed events but there was a lack of assistance / collaboration from other clubs and the sub-committee folded during the season with the committee running the Squash 57 (Racketball) closed competition which ended up being very low on entries due to the lack of advertising etc. It is very disappointing that this season's Junior County Closed is having to be run at a club outside of Shropshire at Wolverhampton LT&SC, due to a lack of viable / economic venues within the county, we must address this for next year's event, there is still a possibility of the competition being cancelled due to a lack of volunteers to manage and run the event a decision will be made at the close of entries, therefore if you do have some time available over the 23/24th September please let us know. KSRC have volunteered to run the senior county closed and Squash 57 county closed events this season which will use the 'play by' dates format from last season for the early rounds and a finals weekend for both events at the end of January, entries are open so please enter now.

ES Inter County Competitions:- The Inter County competition will continue with the new format used last season of stage 1 fixtures carried out over single day and with local counties, stage 2 will be the old format. We have notified ES about teams for this coming season, Mens O35, Mens O45, Mens O55, Mens O60, Ladies, Ladies O40, Squash 57 (Racketball) O40, Boys U19 and Boys U15, we wish all teams and the individuals who represent Shropshire Squash a very successful and highly rewarding season. Dates for the fixtures are available to download from the ES website and put on the notice boards in your respective clubs and they are also included in the SHS website calendar. If you or you know of anybody who wants to represent the County in any of the age groups then please let a member of the Committee know!

Development: Your Committee have continued to work with ES via the WM RF Committee to discuss Squash Development in Shropshire and for our colleagues in Wales. ES continue to develop and are fast becoming a facilitator leaving the RFs to monitor and assist the individual county needs. There will no longer be an area representative from ES. The RF committee consists of a representative from each county and currently consists of Bett Dryhurst (Worcs) Chairperson, Nigel Orrett (War) treasurer, Me (Shrops) secretary, Matt McFahn (Staffs) and Tommy Burton (Her), we meet quarterly at present to review and manage the regional development needs etc. The forums are having to become self-sufficient to a point with small amounts of funding being made available from ES which have to be applied for and used for specific areas of development / regional activities. One of the key areas that has been highlighted this year is the need to boost development in Shropshire and Herefordshire and the WMRF will shortly be advertising for a regional development coach to be based at Kingsland SRC, initially, but with the remit increasing participation, especially juniors, in squash and squash 57 in all Shropshire clubs and to provide a talent pathway from club to regional to ASPIRE to ESDS. I issued an email over the summer to the club contacts asking for a summary of the junior activity at your club so that we could provide interested candidates with a picture of the county's needs. I have only received replies from 3 clubs to date! It is likely that a successful candidate will need to relocate to the county and has to be sure of the earning potential, as ultimately they

will need to be self-sufficient. The WMRF have committed to support the successful candidate in the first 12 months and would hope that the local clubs will grasp this opportunity to re-invigorate their Junior sections and overall participation. We as a county are lacking a junior development officer which is severely hampering the junior development opportunities within the county and again I issued an email over the summer advertising the position and was extremely disappointed to not receive a single response. The juniors are the future of our sport and our clubs and it is imperative this position is filled so that there is a link between the new regional coach, Shropshire committee and the regional forum committee, the new development structure will not work without this being in place and we would have to question whether to put our funds into an initiative that the county does not seem to want to support, therefore I ask you to go back to your clubs and have a serious discussion with your members / Junior parents and ask them if there is someone willing to take up the post. We as a county also have **limited** funds that can be used to support the development of Squash / Squash 57 (Racketball) in the county and are happy to consider any small initiatives at your club. This season we are continuing with the junior development squads with Guy Rutter / Dan Aimer initially running them before the regional coach is appointed.

The Shropshire Squash website – I know I say it every year but it is your website and you can all add news, match results / reports, promote your events etc to keep everyone up to date, so please use it. You can issue anything that you would like advertised to our communications officer, Don Wallington. His details are available via the website.

National / International:-

PSA Rankings

Shropshire player rankings: **Jamie Haycocks – 86** and continuing to play in and win PSA tour titles around the globe.

National Junior Rankings

Anya Stojanovic is currently ranked 8th in the girls U15 national rankings.

National / Series Racketball Rankings

Jason Russell, Chris Wase and Mike Harris are currently ranked.

That completes this year's report. I conclude with a personal and very sincere vote of thanks to all on the Management Committee, who have once again unfailingly promoted and supported Shropshire Squash through another successful season. Please feel free at any time to attend a committee meeting to see how the committee works or be involved in a Championship weekend for example, or anything!. Just let Barry, Guy, Don, Linda, Keith or I know: We look forward to your interest. We do need to continue to add members to the committee and it is not a huge undertaking, only 4-6 mtgs a year but it is crucial to the running / development of the county squash.

I close now, by inviting any comment or questions on the report.

7th September 2017