



East of Scotland Squash & Racketball Association

AGM 2015-16

Jun 23 @ Colinton Castle SC

Chairperson's Report

Office bearers 2014-15: Christy Looby (Chair), Adrian Craxton (Secretary), Mark Adderley (Treasurer & SSRL Rep), Dougie Brown (League Secretary), Claire Gray (Junior Convenor), Richard McIntosh, Ross Anderson, Iain Clark, David Coutts, Moira Atkinson (OCMs)

The above committee has had a busy and fruitful season since we reconvened for the new season in Aug 2015.

Club membership development initiative: This remains on offer, it was re-publicised & promoted but there was no further take-up this season.

East Squash also offers re-imburement of the coaching certification fee, this was successfully completed by one young coach.

Social Media, print media & website: Continues our success initiating this last season, @EastSquash on Twitter (220 followers) and East of Scotland Squash & Racketball on Facebook (165 followers).

Almost weekly our local press promotion continued all season, with an item of East Squash news into the Edinburgh Evening News community sports feature on Tuesdays.

The website project has stopped & re-started under new management, a cleaner-cut mobile-friendly update may be ready for Beta-testing by the time of meeting. The plan to re-launch full content has been delayed a year from Sep 2015.

For event entry fees, EventBrite will ease the burden on organisers.

Sponsorship: We retained our 5 sponsors for the leagues to whom a debt of thanks is owed.

- Avista Technologies (3 divisions for 2 years)
- Titan Sports
- JC Lindsay & Co.
- Scotstrings
- GameChangers/DBPL

This enabled us to produce the stationery for the leagues with suitable advertising at no cost. With Avista's package coming up for renewal, there is an opportunity for new sponsors to come on board. (Local exposure to 600+ ABC1-demographic over 6 months for less than a single advert in a local paper.)

Tournaments:

- The East Championship revived last season moved to ESC this season and grew to 36 entries from East, West, Highland & Central regions. Peter O'Hara took the prize pot in the top grade. Unfortunately we were unable to get a ladies final which is a worry for the future.
- The East Masters 2016 was held on Jan 23 & 24 at The Grange Club. There were a total of 80 entries for the 2 ladies and 9 mens' events, reversing the fall in the previous year. East players Paul Jenkins, Simon Gogolin, Jim Dougal & Ian Ross recorded wins in their age groups. Tournament director Eric Donohoe has run all 29 editions of the East Masters, must be a record worth noting.

Non-league Conference: Last season we had 7 events with 4 anchor clubs, this season it expanded in quality & quantity with Edinburgh University coming on board. The other monthly events were at Watsonians, Galashiels, Grange, Colinton Castle & Edinburgh Sports Club.

Two events had 25 players incl 9 ladies with the other events usually at 16 players incl 6 ladies. Maddy Hallewell at Edinburgh Uni was superb in marshalling her troops and Del Sharratt & his Gala players "would drive 500 miles, just to be the man (& woman) knocking on a squash door".

Edinburgh Uni, on the back of their high female turnout at these early events, formed EUS2 which helped grow East ladies leagues after 7 years of shrinkage.

Next season will potentially see 2 more new teams enter East leagues or retain a team that would otherwise fold.

National League: East region contributed 3 clubs out of 9 in the Men's League (ESC1 who were runners-up in a tight race with Newlands, plus Colinton Castle & Grange). In the women's league, 2 of the 5 teams were from East clubs(ESC again runners up to Newlands, plus Grange).

Finance, Leagues, Juniors & SSRL: See relevant reports.

Knockout Cup: Thanks to David Coutts for continuing this development which grew to 24 teams in a Premiership, Championship & Chairman's cup. The finals were all played in Edinburgh Sports Club prior to the awards dinner. ESC firsts won the premiership, Colinton Castle 2's the championship while ESC 7's won the Chairman's cup. Watsonians blooded an all-junior team & Galashiels made their debut in East competition (40 years after the last appearance by a team from the Borders in East competition).

Awards Dinner: This was sold out this year with JJ kindly donating his ticket to late arrivals. Thanks to ESC for superb hosting & membership support, plus Mike Brown of Colinton for a memorable rendition of "Mustang Sally" while balancing standing on a chair after a few drinks!

School Report: The rule changes made last year to the leagues have been positively received. The transition to SportyHQ has been seemingly seamless, thanks to League Secretary Dougie Brown's enthusiasm. The inclusion of Bridge of Allan has freshened the competitiveness. I am also encouraged that the non-league Conference converts into league growth.

This year I championed "spare" players into the ladies league in an effort to sustain two struggling teams. There is also news of a further new ladies team to bring us back up to 12 teams. This however is a short-term & the reservations I made last year are still valid- the development & retention of junior & senior female players is a long term problem that needs continued attention locally & nationally.

Acknowledgement: All my fellow committee members have been tireless in giving up their time to maintaining the progress in East squash. Special mention of Claire Gray who has been long-serving on committee (7 years) as junior convenor & also in her role as East junior squads coach.

Having previously served on East committee from 2000-2007, I resigned to drive the membership & court expansion at The Grange Club. I was honoured to be asked two years ago when that was complete if I would re-join East as chairman. My one condition was that it be for a 2 year term with the committee strengthened to continue the new initiatives after my time.

Thanks to all the club volunteers for their support in spirit, in person & on social media over the last 2 years. I wish the incoming chairman & committee every success in their continued support of our sport in the region.

Christy Looby

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Jun 18, 2016