

East of Scotland Squash Association

I would like to highlight the following points from season 2008-2009.

East of Scotland Leagues

Ladies League – 2008-09 was the second season with the 3-division, 2-half structure. Again there were 3 divisions with 5 teams in each, with 2 entire sets of fixtures – the first and second halves, with promotion and relegation at the end of both halves. This resulted in 16 matches for every team. The format continued to succeed in its aims of providing a reasonable number of competitive matches for most teams. The first half was won by Watsonians, and the second by C.L.A.S.S. 88. Although not specifically required in the rules, a play-off was held between these two teams, with C.L.A.S.S. 88 winning, thereby making them the 2008-09 Ladies League Winners. Kirkcaldy, Tyne, and Waverley 2 all achieved the feat of being promoted and relegated in the same season.

Open League – Due to the late withdrawal of Kirkcaldy, and the withdrawal of C-Rooks after a few matches, all of the 6 divisions ended up with fewer than (the ideal) 10 teams (9/9/9/9/8/7) . There were a total of 51 teams by the end of the 2008-09 season. As a result I think it is extremely likely that there will only be 5 divisions in season 2009-10. The League Rules state that there should be 10 teams, wherever possible, so a 5 division structure seems reasonable. The ageing population of squash players is inevitably, albeit slowly, reducing the number of teams. The peak number was in 1993 when there were 102, whereas 2008-09 ended with a total of 66.

In Division 1, Edinburgh University Students 1 won for the second year in succession, with Colinton Castle 1 coming second by only 7 points. Waverley 1 confirmed its yo-yo status by winning division 2 by 36 points from Grange 1. They also were the only team in the league to win every match. Edinburgh University Students 2 won Division 3 convincingly. Divisions 4/5/6 were won by David Lloyd 1, Inveresk, and David Lloyd 2 respectively.

Assuming that there is a 5 division structure next season, then there will be far fewer teams relegated than normal.

Since the demise of Marco's Leisure in Grove Street in March 2008, there has thankfully been no further reduction (that I am aware of) in the number of squash courts in the East of Scotland.

Refereeing Bonus This initiative, conceived by Ron Pearman, started in October 2006. It has certainly achieved its objective of increasing the awareness of the Rules of Squash, and the number of qualified referees. By the end of the 2008-09 season, in the East of Scotland, there were:

1 Grade 1 Referee

6 Grade 2 Referees

48 Grade 3 Referees

111 other players who had attended the "Introduction to the Rules" course.

The refereeing initiative nears the end of its roll-out:

After October 2009 teams will only get the 2 point bonus if:

For Open Divisions 1/2/3/4 Ladies & Division 1/2/3 teams must have a qualified Level 3 Referee.

For Open Divisions 5/6 teams must have a player who has either attended an "Introduction to the Rules" course, or is a qualified Level 3 Referee.

After January 2010 teams in any division will only get the 2 point bonus if they have a qualified Level 3 Referee.

There will be an opportunity to be assessed as a Level 3 Referee before the start of season 2009-10

League Sponsors – After 8 years without a sponsor, I am delighted that SCOTSTRINGS (www.scotstrings.co.uk) have agreed to sponsor the East Leagues for the 2009-10 season. East Leagues players get a 10% discount on racket restrings from SCOTSTRINGS.

WEB-based results entry In season 2009-10 we plan to use WEB-based results data entry for at least Open Divisions 1 & 2. This will use the SQUASHMATRIX system (www.squashmatrix.co.uk). At the time of writing we do not have exact details of how this will operate, but these will be communicated to teams well before the start of next season.

2009 AGM

This year's presentation of trophies to the winners of each the League Divisions will again take place during the AGM at The Grange Club, on Monday 8th June 2009, 7:30 p.m. Can each divisional winner please send at least one representative to collect their trophy?

Finance

The funds of ESSA continue in a good state of health. The bottom line of the accounts for 2008-2009 will show a modest surplus. Full accounts will be available at the AGM, as will the Treasurer, Dave Ireson who has been successful in generating extra development income.

Over-35 Team Cups Thanks again to Richard McIntosh for organising this. Watsonians play Edinburgh Sports Club in the final.

SRA Inter-County Event Having not competed in 2007-08, East Scotland entered a team again this year. It consisted of Simon Boughton, Iain Tennant, Adam Bews, Richard McIntosh and Chris Gray. In November they came second in their group, which was a reasonably good outcome, and meant that they were due to compete in the "promotion" group in March. However the mid-March weekend scheduled by England Squash for this clashed with the Scottish Universities' championships, an East of Scotland Junior competition, the North of Scotland Open and the Scottish Masters. Rather than field a seriously weakened team, we decided not to compete in the March SRA Inter-County promotion group. We expect to compete again next season.

East of Scotland and Scottish Squash

This was the fifth year of the new single-tier "Board". Regions now nominate a single Regional Director (the East's is Dave Ireson). The new system of affiliation fees was in its second year in 2008-09. Although some clubs ended up paying their Scottish Squash affiliation fees far later than the official deadline of 31st October, everyone did eventually pay their fees. It remains to be seen whether or not the "disaffected" regions (mainly West of Scotland and Dundee & District) will re-introduce to their League Rules the requirement for all teams/clubs in their regional leagues to be affiliated to Scottish Squash. Scottish Squash planned to replace its out-of-date website with a new one, including the ability for clubs to access details on their registered members. Sadly this new website is more than one year behind schedule for reasons that are unclear. I personally feel that this reflects badly on the credibility of Scottish Squash. The latest expected date for the new Scottish Squash website is end June 2009. What do East clubs feel about the new Scottish Squash affiliation fee system, or any other aspect of Scottish Squash's performance, in the last year? Come along to the East AGM and let us know.

Squash Rankings website

Started in March 2005, www.squashrankings.co.uk now contains all the individual results for the East of Scotland Leagues for seasons 2004-09, the Grampian Leagues for seasons 2005-09, the West Leagues for seasons 2005-09 and most Junior/Senior/Masters events in Scotland. Approx 1,800 players are ranked. The ranking aspect of the website is (by the very nature of a purely results based ranking system) a little controversial, but should generate interest. The 60,000 or so individual results should be of interest to some of the regular East League players – even those who have long since given up hope of improving their ranking! The future for this website is uncertain at the time of writing. The move to using online results entry in season 2009-10, for some East divisions, may result in www.squashrankings.co.uk eventually becoming surplus to requirements, however it is very likely that it will continue for the at least the next season.

Senior Tournaments

The 30th East of Scotland (Hugely Enjoyable) Championships were not held during the 2008-09 season. They are scheduled to take place immediately prior to the start of the 2009-10 season.

The 28th East of Scotland Masters (Edinburgh Sports Club, January 2009) was again very well supported with 116 entries. The entries were well spread over the Men's age groups, and there were enough ladies to allow an Over-35 and Over-50 event again. Men's events were held at Over-35/40/45/50/55/60/65/70. The event has now got about as big as it can get, given that we have "only" 5 courts and 3 days to schedule it in. All results are on the East website – www.essasquash.co.uk.

Juniors

Thanks are due to John Bain in his 8th year as Junior Convener (and his numerous helpers). He will table a report at the AGM.

East of Scotland Squash Association Committee

I would like to thank all the office bearers and members for their help in past season. After 15 years, Ron Pearman is stepping down as League Secretary after the 2009 AGM. On behalf of all East Leagues players, I would like to thank Ron for the huge effort he has put in over so many years. Dougie Brown, a Grange member, is ready to take on the League Secretary role at the AGM, if approved by the electorate. All other Office Bearers and Committee Members are available for re-election. We would welcome at least 3 more committee members and we would like at least one more lady member. It is important that as many clubs/teams as possible are represented on the committee.

East of Scotland Squash Association Office Bearers and Committee members 2008-2009

Chairperson - Eric Donohoe	Secretary - Dave Ferguson
Treasurer - Dave Ireson *	League Secretary - Ron Pearman
Junior Convener - John Bain	

Members - Yvonne Ferguson, Richard McIntosh, Dave Ireson

*East of Scotland Regional Director on board of Scottish Squash

Tournament Organisers

Junior Open: John Bain	Junior Closed: John Bain
Masters: Eric Donohoe	Over-35 Team Cup Richard McIntosh