

# CUMBRIA SQUASH & RACKETBALL

## 2012/2013 SEASON AGM

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

At the beginning of the season, after an encouraging 2011/2012 Season, which followed a similarly encouraging performance in 2010/2011 Season, we were quite up-beat and saw no reason why this season's Activity & Development Plan (previously known as Action Plan) should not be based upon similar initiatives. We expected even more progress.

We had not achieved everything in those seasons but our requirements and expectations for the involved activities and initiatives were the same. Generally we needed to maintain and work to improve what we had been successful with and work even harder to resolve the problems associated with the other less successful activities. It was very much in our minds as we started the season that we still had our major and long term ongoing problems to resolve, with respect to improving adult participation generally, the maintenance and development of our County Leagues and last but certainly not least, developing processes/activities to encourage women players to support us.

How did we do?

You will see our performance from the Activity and Development Plan 2012/2013 Final Report- issued 6 June 2013. This is a detailed and comprehensive report that gives you information on all of our initiatives so I have no need to repeat it in this report. It shows good progress in some areas but unfortunately not in our major areas of concern and we made unexpected retrograde steps in other activities. This situation gives me a feeling of disappointment and concern for the future of our organisation. It poses the question of where do we go from here? - and if we do nothing and just let activities drift away, what does it leave us with?

If we give up on our efforts to improve the situation and accept where we are now we will be a county:

- Without any Women's Inter County Teams – this season we had to drop the Senior Team that had just been re-introduced the previous season after many years without one. Prior to that we have had no women's teams of any category for many years
- With only one Women's County closed Championship – the Senior Women's Championship – that has very little support, just enough to keep it going. We have had no women's age group championships for many years
- With progressively dwindling Men's & Women's County Leagues – we will be lucky to have a Women's League next season.
- With only two Men's Inter County Teams – Senior & Over 60 – we also entered the Over 45 competition but could not even field a team to meet Stage 1 commitment
- With only one Men's County Closed Championships – the Senior Men's Championship. Our efforts to also hold a wide range of Age Group Championships last season were unsuccessful – none was held
- With very little adult support or interest for Coach and M&R development
- With very little support from clubs to even consider introducing Racketball even though ESR has offered to pay for Paul's services for road shows & coaching to promote the sport

This season we hoped to make progress in these activities but failed to do so.

What should we do next season?

As a County association that by definition works on behalf of our Clubs I believe that we provide most processes and activities expected of us to meet our internal county and club requirements. We also maintain the comprehensive activity scope and infrastructure expected of us by ESR to hold our status as a valid, well respected and fully integrated county in its national network, which allows us to take advantage of the benefits of such status

I have always worked to achieve and maintain this for our organisation and hope that we can continue in this way but we will not be able to do so if we fail to change the situation detailed above – a situation that would be even worse if the Men's County League takes a down turn from its current low level, then we would be in real trouble.

We will end up being primarily a Junior County Organisation with no adult activities and limited technical support processes.

My concerns if this is the case are – what effect will it have on ESR expectations of us and how will that effect the financial and other support it gives? – what will be the effect on junior players?

By extremely good management of CJS over many years and a lot of hard work by the committee members concerned we have a junior organisation that is second to none and continues to develop – you will see from the ADP report that there are some aspects of it that we need to work on but nothing that can't be resolved, so this is an excellent situation to be in and we must do everything to ensure that it is maintained. My concern is that with no established adult structure to join, when our junior players have to leave the junior ranks - to provide competition for them, to continue their development and give them an excellence pathway to the national scene - what will they do? We will have let them down if we allow this to happen.

So, the Executive Committee had a decision to make - what do we do next season? – do we just let activities drift away and see our credibility as a comprehensive and fully effective organisation disappear? – or do we keep fighting?

I think you know my answer - as you are aware I don't give things up easily because once activities are lost it is very difficult to re-introduce them, so before we made the decision we looked for something that may have been contributory to the situation and we came up with the following that we thought fitted that category - we all felt that our communications processes were limited and not very good - and the poor support given by some clubs in promoting our activities did not help even though I have requested better support from them many times over the years

I hope that we are not “grasping at straws” but we saw these as problems that if resolved would give us the confidence to try again with hopefully some degree of success. We already have some development work being progressed on communication processes and website by Guy, Jonny & Bridget that will improve the way we advise clubs and the membership generally what we are doing - and we will try again to encourage clubs to set themselves up to positively react to county information and be proactive in meeting our requirements. I have already sent a note to clubs asking for their support in this way.

On this basis we have decided not to drop any activities and to prepare next season's A&D Plan with similar content as last season's plan and effectively try again and hope that we are successful

We are already progressing one initiative to hit two of our ongoing major concerns - increase adult participation generally and increase the involvement of women particularly. Based upon some work done as part of this season's A&D Plan, we are holding a Racketball Development Workshop on the same day as the AGM – you have already been made aware of this by Guy. The Yorkshire Squash and Chapel Allerton Club racketball expert, Peter Edwards, will be guest speaker to inform us how and why he introduced racketball to his club and the benefits of doing so. Also, how he encouraged other clubs and Yorkshire Squash county organisation to incorporate racketball into their activities – Yorkshire Squash has a very impressive racketball set up. It is very important that you support this workshop so please come along

If at the end of next season we have still not made significant progress, with the best will in the world I have to accept the situation – I don't think the Executive Committee would agree to further attempts to run activities that obviously the membership does not want – too much time and effort is involved and volunteers are only prepared to do so much before calling it a day. We will then have to take stock and decide on the future structure and direction of our organisation and its relationship with ESR.

To complete this part of my report I will end with a similar statement that I ended my report with at the last AGM, to remind you of what we have and what we risk losing if we don't make the necessary changes:

A very effective Junior Organisation - sound financial processes that are being progressively improved - good financial reserves - a very generous long term sponsor - a wide ranging infrastructure for men, women, boys & girls covering competitive activities, technical support processes and administrative processes - excellent relationship with and support from ESR. Angela considers us to be the best managed county in the NW Region - dedicated volunteers to manage and administer our organisation – and much more.

All we need is the dedicate support from Clubs and their members to allow us to maintain and take advantage of these and ensure that our organisation continues and flourishes.

We have it all going for us so it would be sad if we let this situation slip away.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

### **1. Sponsorship**

It is important at the AGM that I mention the generous organisations that give us financial and other support

- **Thomas Graham & Sons Ltd (Roger Smith – Managing Director)**

We have just completed the 6<sup>th</sup> season of a 10 season agreement where Roger provides us with £1000 per season financial support for CJS.

In addition, he also generously finances our new County Player Recognition Process, for all of our county players – senior & junior. As you will be aware this is based upon new squash shirts and Roger is financing their purchase. We have just completed the first of a five year agreement with him.

Roger – we can't thank you enough for such generous support that is very much appreciated

- **Dunlop**

As part of England Squash & Racketball and Dunlop County Support Programme, Dunlop continues to provide squash balls for home Inter County matches & prizes for Junior county Closed Championships to the value of £900 – this season in the form of 6 Biomimetic Pro GT-X 130 squash Rackets worth £720 and 6 Dunlop Backpacks worth £180. As usual we raffled them amongst the juniors entering the championship.

Our thanks to Dunlop for this generous support that has been given for many years.

### **2. Bereavement**

Sometimes at the AGM unfortunately I have some sad news to report and this is one of those occasions. I am sorry to report that three of our squash colleagues died this year – Simon Storey, Sheena Jones and Ken Pearson. I issued a separate note to the membership for each of them.

On behalf of our organisation I send our deepest sympathies to their families, friends and squash colleagues

### **3. Special Achievers**

Each season I am pleased to acknowledge special achievers

- **Peter Smith** for winning The Hazel Award
- **All winners** of the County Closed Championships
- **All winning teams** in the County League and League Cup Competitions

- **Ronnie Bell** for being selected as Captain of England Over- 60 Squash Team for the end of season Home Internationals at Nottingham in May 2013. The team won both of its matches and Ronnie won both of his games at No 1. This is not the first time that Ronnie has been in this position, in previous seasons he has achieved England honours in the Over 50 and Over 55 teams
- **The Girls U19 and Boys U13 Inter County Teams** for reaching the Inter County National Finals
- **Chloe Lowes** for winning the Matthew Allison Award at the Junior county Closed Championships
- **Kelly Briscoe & Craig Richardson** for being selected as Women`s & Men`s County League Players of the Year
- **Individual players who have given exceptional performances in ESR Regional and National competitions** – I don`t get reports on all of them so I will not try to name them – I am sure to miss someone
- **Wigton Squash Club** for obtaining reaccreditation of their ESR Silver Clubmark Award

I can`t end my report without thanking the clubs and people who have supported us during the season

- Sponsors – your support is essential to us and is much appreciated
- Everyone who has entered our competitions and attended other activities
- Clubs and individuals that have supported us in any way – including giving their facilities free of charge (this applies to all clubs we used)
- Stephen – Hazel Tait`s son, for presenting the Hazel Award. Also to Ray Tait and his wife Carolyn for coming along to support Stephen. Ray has attended the award presentation every year since it was introduced
- Angela Cwaczko – ESR NW Region Manager – for her comprehensive, generous and continued support for our organisation.
- Bridget for continuing to manage and maintain the website in a very effective way and for working with Guy and Jonny in their work to introduce the new website
- John Graham, Accountant for Penrith Rugby Club, who is our new auditor
- Vince Todhunter for continuing to help to run the Senior County Closed Championships – keeping a promise he made when he retired from the Executive Committee
- Last but certainly not least my colleagues on the Executive and Junior Committees for their dedicated services to our organisation and in providing it for giving up many hours of their valuable time. As usual it has been a pleasure working with you.

I try to keep optimistic about the future of CSR but see next season`s performance as a major indicator as to what that may be

I look forward to working with everyone to achieve a positive result

Thank you for reading this report

My best wishes to everyone for 2013/2014 season

**Tom**

Tom Armstrong – Chairman

## CUMBRIA SQUASH & RACKETBALL

### 2012/2013 AGM

#### STATUS OF ACTIONS RECORDED IN THE MINUTES OF THE 2011/2012 AGM

**Ref Minute 2.2.3** Complete the changes associated with the organisations name change to Cumbria Squash & Racketball – **Tom & Guy**

The outstanding work was:

- Make the new CSR logo introduced by Guy at the meeting available to the membership and Introduce into general use
- Incorporate the organisations new name and logo onto the TG&SL squash shirts and make them available to our Inter County Teams.

Both of these have been done – **Action complete**