

# **Cheshire Squash Rackets Association**

## **Chairman's Report**

**2016/17**

Welcome to you all tonight and thank you for attending the 2016/17 AGM of Cheshire SRA

We live in a world of seemingly constant change, where demands of time and finance are increasing year by year. So much so that there is the temptation to consider the needs of only those inside our immediate circle.

I am pleased to say, however, that there is a large group of people who do not take that attitude and, with squash as their passion, want to pass that on to others and to the next generation.

I am referring, of course, to all those who run the clubs in the county. Most are volunteers who give their time willingly and freely to help the sport flourish in Cheshire. Without you and your activity in the clubs the sport would struggle to find a future. So Thank you.

From among you, there is another group, whose work for the sport often goes unseen, but is a vital part of what makes Cheshire Squash so well thought of in the country. Your county committees, senior committee, ladies League Committee and Junior committee, do such a lot of behind the scenes work, that all the activities run smoothly and so well. Thank you to all the committees and I would also issue the invitation to all players, current and past to come and join us as we seek to further squash and racketball in the county. There is so much more we could do if we have enough volunteers and, if you volunteer you will certainly find it a rewarding experience. Besides, you will no doubt bring fresh new ideas.

I also want to thank all the players, men and women, boys and girls, who have maintained squash as a fantastic sport in the county and recognised throughout the country and throughout the world.

Many top players and referees have come from Cheshire and represented us at the highest levels. Looking back we can think of Paul Lord, Justin Rennie, Robert Forde, Andy Whipp and currently we can name Emily Whitlock, ranked 13 in the world.

Emily lifted her first PSA Challenger in May 2015. In March 2016, she became the first woman to lift two PSA World Tour titles that year. She reached the Semi-final of the Macau Open and the Cleveland Classic and made it to the quarter-final stage of the British Open in 2017. For the first time in her career after she beat Alison Waters in the second round.

Rachel Chadwick, ranked 58, reached the Belfast Open final and the Nantes open final.

Adam Murrills, ranked 87, reached the final of the Hast la vista Open, the Open International d'Angers and was winner of the Russian Open.

I also need to mention some players who are a little older. Geoff Coe achieved his goal of representing England at O70 level. Jane Law at her age level has a ranking of No 2 in Europe and was European Masters Champion in 2015. And Rod Boswell, who continues to play at the highest level. He was the British Open O70s champion in 2016

I want to make special mention of an achievement that is, perhaps unparalleled. The Cheshire Ladies team, for the fifth year in six has become the Inter County Champions.

All this success is due, not only to the commitment and dedication of the individual players, but in large measure is due to the Cheshire Clubs which have supported them, often in ways that we can't imagine or quantify.

The Cheshire committee is conscious that the health and success of the sport is so dependent on healthy grass roots. Over the past few years we have put resources into junior development and this investment is already bearing fruit, with an increased number of juniors playing in their senior club teams and, as the junior report will show, the sport is growing in quantity and quality.

We are grateful to the clubs who have supported us in this effort. Some of you have offered courts free of charge. We would ask you to thank your members on our behalf.

You will, no doubt be aware, that promoting and developing our sport demands resources, both in terms of time and money. Cheshire has been fortunate in that, over the years, the committee has, under the guidance of our treasurers, been fantastic stewards of your money. Despite that, our resources are limited and our income streams are not yet at a level to enable us to do all that we would like.

One of the major challenges that your committee faces, and I, as chairman, am engaged with, is to persuade the Governing body to fully recognise, appreciate and adequately support the work that we do. In common with a number of other counties and other groups such as masters squash and referees, we are finding this task difficult.

There are many issues in this task and I am happy to discuss them with you and provide you with documents and email records. One immediate notice for you is that England Squash is planning to introduce a new membership and affiliation scheme from December 2017.

We will keep you fully informed

Alan Batchelor

June 2017

Dear All,  
2016-2017 Season, Cheshire Squash County Captains report.

Shall start with the Seniors region 1, 5<sup>th</sup> Nov, stage 1 At Bowden, Winning the stage beating Merseyside 5-0, then North Wales 5-0  
Stage 2, 25<sup>th</sup> feb again at Home beating Durham and Cleveland 4-1. Squad for the 2 stages were Rob Taylor, Ollie Hudson, Matt Lowery  
Jake Robinson, Chris Longman, Andy Whipp, Adam Murrills, Sean Hunter. 8 players used.

Over 35s Stage 1 Held in Shropshire, Cheshire lost to 4-1 to Shropshire, Then beating Ulster in there 2<sup>nd</sup> match 3-2. Captain Jon Hunter was injured so Matt Uren stood in, Stage 2 , 14<sup>th</sup> Jan, was held in Warrington, 1<sup>st</sup> match Cheshire beating the Lancs 4-1.  
2<sup>nd</sup> match Cheshire beat Ulster again 4-1, Squad for the 2 stages were Matt Lowery, Jon Davies, Peter Astbury, Steve Glenton, Gareth Frost, Matt Uren, Karl Hardy and to new comer Rob Taylor. 8 players used.

Over 45s, Stage 1 at Warrington, 12<sup>th</sup> November, 1<sup>st</sup> Match Cheshire beat Lancs 4-1, 2<sup>nd</sup> match Cheshire beat Ulster 5-0 winning the Weekend, Stage 2 played at Yorkshire, Cheshire lost 5-0 against a strong Durham and Cleveland, 2<sup>nd</sup> match Cheshire lost 2-3 to hosts Yorkshire, 45s squad was Matt Uren Captain, Gary Walker, Peter Astbury, Jason Morris, Jon Clark , Rob Blair, Karl Hardy, Richard Ingle.  
8 players used.

Over 55s, Stage 1, Home Warrington venue, 15<sup>th</sup> October. 1<sup>st</sup> Match Cheshire lost to National champs Lancs 4-1 who had out a team full Of national players, 2<sup>nd</sup> match Cheshire beat Derbyshire 4-1.  
Stage 2 Again at Warrington only played the one match against Durham and Cleveland which we won 5-0.  
Squad for the 55s, Rob Blair Captain, Rick Walker, Kevin Oneill, Roger Moss, Doug Waller, Grayme Heward, David Whitehead,  
Mike Hickson and Barry Watkins are the 2 newcomers to the squad. 9 players used.

Over 60s, Stage 1, played in Lancs, 8<sup>th</sup> OCT, Cheshire beat hosts Lancs 2-1. 2<sup>nd</sup> match Cheshire beat Merseyside 2-1 winning the weekend.  
Stage 2, 18<sup>th</sup> feb , played in Durham. Cheshire beat hosts Durham 2-1 then went on to beat Lancs 3-0.  
Squad for the 60s was Geoff Walton Captain and new NWCL secretary, Phil Osbourne, Alan Percival, Steve Ward, Trevor Jones and Mike Quartley.  
5 Players used.

Over 65s, only 1 stage, played in Lancs, Cheshire lost to hosts 2-1, 2<sup>nd</sup> match beating Merseyside 3-0. Squad was Rod Boswell Captain, Clive Harrison, Paul Vale, Only the 3 players used. All together 35 different players used by Cheshire in 20 Matches.

## Cheshire Junior Squash – Chairman's Report 2016-2017

The continued financial support of the Senior Committee has provided the seed funding for ongoing improvement of the Junior program. Thanks to the efforts in particular of Peter Bilson (Head Coach) and Pauline Hall (Secretary) the levels of participation and standard of squash is continuing to grow favourably.

Successes during the year have included a popular monthly grand prix competition aimed at providing match play for entry and grass route levels in a fun environment. A monthly programme of structured training as a pathway to the inter-county level and national competitions, progressing from a potential squad, through to transitional squad, and leading to the elite squad. This structured programme has already shown results with an increased participation in the Junior County closed, inter-county and Northern Cup.

Also notable is the participation of juniors from a significant proportion of clubs in the county, and to their credit the investment of these clubs in junior development. The County structure is available to support and supplement this healthy increase in activity.

The financials are improving year on year, to the extent that we are now providing a fully encompassing county structured programme with a dedicated head coach for no additional cost to Cheshire Seniors and a profit of £1,960.79 this year.

We are already discussing ways of improving and refreshing the programme for next season to accommodate our increasing needs and build on this success.

A big thank you to all the clubs and individuals who have provided their support this year, and we look forward to their continued support in the future.

It is also great to see home grown talent giving back to the county. Thanks particularly goes to Ollie Harris for his support to the juniors over the years and whilst he has now moved out of the juniors it is great to see Ollie taking up a coaching position at Prestbury Squash Club. We wish him and all the juniors at Prestbury every success.

## REFEREE'S REPORT

Meeting 31st May 2017

This year it has been light for Cheshire Referees, we had the Men's Over 45s & 55s at Warrington.

Joss and I attended this year's National Championships, the Referees had a visit from Kier Worth, he sat in front of about 12 Referees of all grades and he spoke about how we are valued and that we are recognised as an integral part of Events, this man and his organisation cannot be trusted. The Referees Advisory group have a meeting with Mr Worth on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June, let's see what comes out of that.

In April Rosie, Joss and I attended the Senior Inter Counties in Manchester, as we have heard Cheshire Ladies had another victory.

We have a Referee workshop at Chester on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June at 1pm at Chester Rugby Club, Ian Walton from Chester who is organising the event told me he has contacted 11 clubs with the info on the website, on Monday he had 6 takers and he believes people will turn up on the day.

Ged Shields

Cheshire Squash Referees Coordinator