

## **TO ALL CLUB SECRETARIES**

What follows is a note arising from the recent club presentations which many club secretaries attended .

You may wish to forward this note to your membership.

### **1 BACKGROUND**

Membership of all sports clubs is in decline. The decline is particularly marked in squash. Members know only too well that Squash in Scotland has lost numerous venues, clubs, leagues and teams as well as seen a significant decline in the number of general leisure players.

There are of course many reasons for the decline in all sports and in sports participation in general but the absence of or poor marketing of sports is recognised as a major factor.

With Squash played almost every day of the 2014 Commonwealth Games and real medal prospects, we have a unique local opportunity to leverage both a benign political environment to the Games' sports and increased awareness of our sport and create more members to sustain our club network. Some of you may also be aware that the World Squash Federation (WSF) has applied to the IOC to have Squash admitted as an Olympic sport in 2020. The Olympic bid is well funded. WSF has engaged Mike Lee, who has extensive experience in sports events and bids, including London 2012, to drive the bid through. We will know the IOC decision in Q4 2013

The Olympic bid campaign slogan is **SQUASH - SPORT AT ITS BEST.**

So we may have a unique opportunity for our sport to step up and claim its share of voice, of available athletes and of those who participate in any sport.

However it is not enough to wish or expect it to happen and for "legacy" to materialise as if by magic.

Matters are in our own hands. We need to take additional action.

We all need to promote our sports and our clubs to secure a future for our sports.

One of the ways to get more business is to expand the market and we are doing just that with the creation of 3 new variants.

In this way we hope to make rebound racquet sports more accessible to others.

Privately we say our line of business is "*bashing a ball against a wall*". The more people who see "*bashing a ball against a wall*" as a valid sport the better it will be for Squash in the long term.

And so we have created more accessible variants of our elite sport.

**racketball 3s** is a format of Racketball designed specifically for young adult males - the core market of squash when it was at its peak who possibly now feel better served now by commercial 5 a side football.

**racketball2s** is a format of Racketball designed with couples and ladies in mind - a sociable form of rebound racquet sports designed to make clubs family centred and also appeal to the Zumba generation

**racquet WALL** is a format of Racketball played on a single wall – a way in which we can take rebound racquet sports where there are presently no courts and introduce everyone to rebound racquet sports

All of these variants have been developed in Scotland over the last 6 months.

In the case of **racquet WALL** we are already in discussions with new partners to take this great idea forward and get the nation bashing that ball against a wall. I would be particularly keen to hear from any of you who would like to develop **racquet WALL** in your area through your private networks and contacts.

The current draft information sheets on **racketball 3s**, **racketball 2s** and **racquet WALL** are attached for your information.

## 2 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Having created the products, we are now committed to undertake national promotion of **racketball 2s** and **racketball 3s** to bring new people into the courts and into club membership.

As we are fortunate to have access to software designed for outbound marketing, we intend to target certain groupings in the next 4 months to make them aware of **racketball 3s** and **racketball 2s** and **to offer them the opportunity to trial these new exciting and accessible formats in your clubs.**

Over the last 6 months we have been loading the details of target groups on to the system. In this way we hope to access in excess of 500,000 people who we believe fit the target demographics of **racketball 3s** and **racketball 2s** as described above.

At the recent 2020 vision presentations all club secretaries who attended committed unused court time to this initiative. Taking those who attended as sample of our membership we will now assume unless told otherwise that all member clubs are prepared to commit unused court

time to this initiative.

There will be numerous press releases on the initiatives, continuing the positive press that the sport has been receiving in Scotland in recent months.

The key players in the Scottish press are already aware of **racketball 3s** and **racketball 2s**.

Clubs who feel they cannot commit to this initiative must indicate their intention to opt out by Friday the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2011.

### **3 HOW IT WORKS**

#### **a WHAT WE ARE DOING**

We will use our resources to drive new people to our member clubs.

We will contact groupings of targets in 5 campaigns.

The first campaign starting the 12<sup>th</sup> December will be targeted at professional sportsmen and is designed primarily to create awareness of the initiative at the turn of the year when people are considering New year resolutions. Any uptake in this area presents opportunities for national and local press.

The other 4 groups will be contacted in 4 stages, December through to March.

They will be offered free court access to participating clubs for the following month. e.g Fire Brigade staff - February

Groups will be contacted as shown below.

The order in which the target sub groups contained in Groups 1 – 4 are grouped is yet to be determined. The order will be balanced to reflect the size of the sub groups and the features known about the demographic e.g. teachers and dates of school holidays

## 2012 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE



### b WHAT CLUBS NEEDS TO DO

We do not intend to lumbar the exercise wise Terms and Conditions and kill it with bureaucracy.

It is a very simple, strong message - **FREE SPORT FOR A MONTH.**

When a contact is made with the club it is up to the clubs to make everyone welcome, give them a great experience and hopefully to convert them into members.

Following consultation, we believe that flexibility and a warm welcome is the key to success, not the specific court times.

Clubs are therefore encouraged to be as flexible as possible with their free time with these new prospects .

The cost of introducing that new prospect, your cost of sales, is covered by the central activity.

Every club has free court time that generates no income. The campaign lets you realise value from that unused court time.

At worst if you need to displace a member to give someone a trial that a very small cost for a potentially long term upside

Respondents will be asked to contact clubs in advance.

Clubs therefore be required to give SSRL a contact phone number for the publicity.

Please supply this by Friday the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2011.

**c WHICH CLUBS ARE INCLUDED ?**

All member clubs are included in the campaign.

Any club still to affiliated for season 2011 – 2012 is encouraged to do so immediately or be excluded from this initiative.

**d WHAT ABOUT PUBLIC COURTS?**

Any club who has appropriate relations with their public court providers is encouraged to speak with their providers to ask if they will support the initiative and advise SSRL accordingly so that they can be included in the publicity material. This is the likely to be the most successful route in this sector however SSRL will also be contacting all local authority providers to ask them to support the initiative and where agreements are made local clubs will be advised.

In the case of public courts we will endeavour to secure contact details of those participating in order that local clubs based in the facility can make contact and follow up interest and convert to membership.

**5 SUMMARY**

A lot of development work has gone into getting us to this stage.

The timing is right for our sport to attempt to revitalise itself.

We now need to leverage the potential of Glasgow 2014, the 2020 Olympic bid and the exciting new variants developed here in Scotland for the Scottish market.

I look forward to working with every club in Scotland in this ambitious, worthwhile, possibly unique and newsworthy exercise and ensuring that Scottish Squash is – **SPORT AT ITS BEST**

Thank you

John

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PROMOTING, FOSTERING AND DEVELOPING SQUASH AND RACKETBALL IN SCOTLAND

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