**Jersey Squash and Racketball Association (JSRA)**

**President’s Report 2016**

I offer this report as a summary of the past 12 months and hope that I have not left anything important out, as usual there has been so much going on! I also offer this report as my last as President, after some 14 years, all of which have been both exciting and rewarding.

**Funding**

The JSRA’s core funding of £30k comes 50/50 from Bedell and the States of Jersey.

Our relationship with Bedell remains strong and I believe they get good exposure for their sponsorship of the development programme, Nick and I have regular meetings with them. We continue to try and find ways of agreeing a longer term commitment but it continues to be year on year. It will be an urgent matter for the new Committee to start negotiating a continuance of Bedell’s involvement, or consider a new sponsorship policy.

Education, Sport and Culture continue to be highly satisfied with the development work being done and the commitment demonstrated by the JSRA through Nick’s tireless work with schools and community projects.

Our relationship with the One Foundation and the Sports Foundation has been quite dynamic and for the most part positive. It has been a bit frustrating at times but the OF and SF still remain important partners and the JSRA should continue to work with them to get the most out of the LTAD programmes and funding potential.

The Advisory Council continue to provide funds for travel costs and coach education. The JSRA apply for and receive funds that can then be allocated, subject to Individual applications and performance reports. John Garton has lead the JSRA’s new policy and procedure in this and funds for this year have been made available in a clear and fair way.

**Commonwealth Games**

The CGAJ, following directives from the CGA, have significantly changed the way athletes qualify with a likely impact on the size of Jersey’s teams in the future. Although the Gold Coast would appear to be beyond our player’s reach, the JSRA should continue to work with the CGAJ to achieve the best results for our athletes as the Commonwealth Games remains an aspirational event, particularly for squash which does feature in the Olympics. Not forgetting the Youth Games which is also something our young players can strive for, although squash’s inclusion in the Youth Games is sporadic.

**Tournaments**

There was mixed support from the playing community, but overall the JSRA’s calendar of events was very successful. The JSRA must strive to continue to put together an interesting and inclusive range of events each season. Events provide an opportunity for players, raise standards and, importantly, raise funds for the JSRA. It is a big task organising events and as usual the challenge is to attract entries and volunteers to help the Committee. Events are also important as the JSRA’s main leverage in growing the membership of the Association.

The Inter Insular continues to be a challenge. Even hosting this year we experienced difficulties in raising enthusiasm and availability for the event. Having said that both the Senior and Junior events were fantastic, success for Jersey in both with a special mention to the Juniors who lifted the title afterat least 16 years. Together the JSRA and GSRA are determined to find a format to re-invigorate the event and address the funding issues that are perceived to be part of the problem. Discussions are under way. Personally I think it is more a need to devote more energy and earlier planning to inspire players, to reinforce the importance and tradition of the event.

Our second venture into Europe recently was an outstanding success. We attracted a new sponsor in Rathbones and came away with a Bronze medal. Well done to the team of Nick Taylor, Charlie Griggs, Scott Gautier, Rob Hickling and Ian Furness, particular mention to Ian and Nick for their management and organisation.

The Jersey Squash Classic has been and gone for another year, a fantastic event and a result of extremely hard work by Nick Taylor and his team. In particular Steve McMahon helped Nick attract loads of sponsors and the tournament itself went off very smoothly, great to have the mixed event, the girls really added something and for many the first chance of seeing woman’s squash played at this level. Also great PR for the sport and great legacy work done with the schools, really good. Let’s see what next year brings.

**Racketball**

Racketball continues to grow, threatening to outstrip squash in the number of participants.

The Wildfire Leagues, Red Sports and the JS&RC racketball leagues provide significant numbers, attracting retired squash players, preventing soon to be retired squash players from leaving the scene as well as being taken up by new players who just like racketball. Racketball is no longer the poor relation. We must support its growth and look at more ways to have it recognised as a sport in its own right. In particular we must look at ways that we can grow the racketball festival and perhaps sometimes separate the racketball tournaments from squash tournaments etc. Again I have taken this from last year’s report as I believe it still applies.

**Media and PR**

The JSRA has achieved lots of media coverage over the past 12 months and this is crucial to the continuing support of Bedell. It will also help in attracting other sponsors and increase the level of awareness within the community.

Probably the 2 highlights in this regard were the PSA Classic and our European Team success.

The JSRA web site is much improved and here I must make mention of the contribution of Tim McKimmon who the JSRA were able to employ for 6 months as an Administrative Assistant, he did a great job and really helped the JSRA during that period. Frances Pallot has since taken on the task of producing the JSRA newsletters and is enjoying the tech challenge and the newsletters are great and very important to keep the JSRA communicating with the membership.

**Jersey Squash and Racketball Club**

The JS&RC have many challenges still, not least financially. There is a great need for increased membership and sponsorship to enable them to maintain the courts and Club facilities to as a high standard as possible. I believe they have achieved a lot in the past 12 months and in particular the courts are in great shape and I would remark that there was a great improvement in the number of events held at the Club, Club Champs, pool league, social events, bbqs and Club nights. The JSRA will continue to work closely with the Club and we greatly appreciate their support and generosity with their venue. The JSRA considers the Club as its HQ, not just for holding JSRA tournaments but also the fact that Nick is based there. It does lead to confusion sometimes as to the distinction between the JSRA and the JS&RC and we must continue to work towards clarity in this regard.

**Regent Racquets Club**

Now up and running, properly constituted, Club Marked, and doing great work, the RRC is a welcome addition to squash and racketball. Yvonne Mundy keeps us informed of progress and the JSRA has been keen to provide support where possible and promote their events. Communications need to remain good and improved furtherand to that end a delegate from RRC is always welcome to attend JSRA meetings to raise issues and offer ideas and support. We wish the RRC continued growth and success.

**Other affiliates**

The Red Sports squash and racketball leagues at Fort regent and Wildfire Racketball league at Les Quennevais continue and thanks to Ian Horswell and Gordon Burgis respectively for the effort they put in. Nick gives great support to both Leagues and both Ian and Gordon have repaid that support with promoting the aims of the JSRA with many of the players paying to be members of our association.

Congratulations must also go to Elite Squash, Mike Hopkins has grasped the opportunity to create a business at Fort Regent and all island events now have his players competing. This has created another layer to JSRA events and another pathway for young and older players to develop.

**England Squash and Racketball**

We continue to affiliate directly to England Squash and Racketball. There continues to be frustration as to the benefit of that, certainly through the Dorset connection. Nick has a good relationship with ES&R and the recent Level 1 and 2 coaching courses here in Jersey are positive examples. Membership to the JSRA entitles members to a discounted ES membership and this is required by all wishing to compete in ES events.

**Challenges**

There are many challenges for this new look Committee with a new look President, but many rewards also. The JSRA responsibilities to not only junior development and schools programme but sponsors, funding, States of Jersey, One Foundation, CGAJ, IGAJ, Jersey Sports Council, support of JS&RC and other clubs and academies, ES&R, web site, media and PR, selection policy, complaints procedure, child protection, coach and referee education, tournaments (including Inter Insular, C I Individuals), racketball development and the management/retention of the Director of Squash and Racketball and there are probably others I have missed.

Nick tells me that over 320 children a week from September – May have been involved in the squash and racketball development programme, all 24 primary and secondary schools have been involved with the addition of five private schools. We have continued working with Mont A’Labbe helping with their special needs programme and the Jersey Youth Trust received a taster in squash and racketball as part of their mental Health awareness week.

**Thanks**

I would like to thank the current JSRA Committee of Kate Cadigan, Ian Furness, Rob Boylan, John Garton, Frances Pallot, Ian Horswell and Neal Pickersgill for all their hard work and support over the past 12 months.

I would like to thank all the JSRA Committees over the past 14 years.

A lot of personal time is given freely to assist in the running of the JSRA and I thank all the other many volunteers that have helped at any time throughout the years.

Along with me, Kate Cadigan is standing down as Vice President and I would like to pay a personal tribute to the work she has done with the JSRA, her broader vision and care for development and particular assistance with ladies squash and passion for the Inter Insular have been outstanding and just being lovely and a real support for me throughout. On behalf of the current Committee I wish her all the best for the future, Kate has expressed a willingness to help out “off committee” which I am sure will be appreciated. Thank you Kate.

Neal Pickersgill is another retiree and I thank him for all the work and time he has put in, particularly looking out for the racketballers, but general selection and committee work and Commonwealth Games, Neal has a long history of involvement and I thank him for his support, thanks Neal.

Finally I would like to pay tribute to the work of Nick Taylor, since November 2009 I have had the pleasure to be his boss on behalf of the JSRA. It would be hard to overestimate the impact Nick has had on Jersey Squash and Racketball, there have been interesting times, some tense times, political challenges but overwhelming positive times in the development of our sports, and fundamentally that is what I have been about. The growth of the number of juniors playing squash, adults playing racketball, school and community involvement, coach education, new clubs and academies, appreciation from new sponsors, the retention of Bedell etc can all, in whole or in great part, be attributed to Nick’s work and passion for the sports and belief in himself. On top of that, his world class ability and experience as a player has been a real asset for Jersey squash and racketball.

Thank you and I wish the new JSRA Committee all the best for the future.

Steve Law

President JSRA