

Scottish Squash Annual Report 2020-21



TOGETHER FOR SQUASH IN SCOTLAND



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Chief Executive:

Maggie Still

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to our Scottish Squash Annual Report where I am once again pleased to present my introduction, reflecting on the 2020-21 year and looking forward to the year to come. It would be easy for this report to be dominated by the pandemic that has hit us all over the past eighteen months, and while it will not be ignored, I would also like to highlight the great work that has been done in inclusion, and to support clubs and players, and to work with partners, whilst we have focussed upon trying to bring about a safe return to the sport of squash.

At Scottish Squash, we have consistently engaged with the Scottish Government, both through our partners **sportscotland**, and directly, to make the positive case for the return of squash. We have also worked with clubs to access any financial support from local authority grant aid. Our aim remains to support a swift and safe return to play and to assist the reopening of facilities as we come out of lockdown.

We have been commended as a sector, by the Minister for Public Health, Women's Health and Sport, for our efforts in keeping the squash community safe. However, these have been extremely frustrating times for squash players and we look forward to a full reopening of facilities as soon as possible. We look to a future where we can ensure that squash clubs not only open, but remain open for everyone, and we never again face such devastating restrictions as we have as a sport in Scotland, since March 2020. This will help to ensure a more robust sustainable future for our sport at all levels.

Whilst the past eighteen months have been challenging for all, they have also presented opportunities and I am keen to highlight some outstanding areas of success for the sport across Governance, Development and Performance.

Governance

I remain grateful for the continuing support of our lead investor, **sportscotland**. The team at **sportscotland** has been by our side throughout this difficult journey, working with us in our attempts to positively influence the Scottish Government. We thank Kevin Ferguson, our Partnership Manager for his focussed support and guidance. We are grateful for the flexibility that has been built into the **sportscotland** investment to enable Scottish Squash to support clubs and players. We are also grateful for the additional funding opportunity with the SGB Recovery Fund, which we hope will provide support for specific pockets of recovery as the sport reopens.

Scottish Squash primary sponsor Springfield Properties have once again been outstanding in supporting players, events and programmes and enabling Scottish Squash to continue to operate. Our sincere thanks go out to Sandy Adam, Sandy's team at Springfield, and to the Adam Family Foundation for their continuing support.

The volunteer Board of Directors have provided balanced decision making and core skills and experience to support our Chief Executive, Maggie Still and her management team. This year we introduced three new Directors to the Scottish Squash Board through the appointments of Graeme Jones (performance), Lisa Aitken (player nominee), Marc Hope (finance & commercial). These Directors have been joined after the year end by Steve Black in Grampian and Jennifer McArtney in Tayside and Fife. Directors have wasted no time in supporting the development of the performance and commercial strategies and ensuring a strong voice for players on the Board.

Another excellent effort from the Scottish Squash Board, underpinned by the Chief Operating Officer Garry McKay, culminated in a successful audit of the governance of the sport. I would like to personally thank the Scottish Squash Board of Directors for the time and energy given to the sport of squash in Scotland.

Development

Squash' long term future relies on an expansion of our player base. Last year I spoke of my passion for equality and inclusion in sport. I outlined the projects and programmes that enable us to reach out to new audiences, such as **sportscotland** funded 'H/T SQUASH', G/RLS DO SQUASH, and Springfield Properties funded 'Going for Gold' and 'schoolsquash'. Whilst it has been difficult to move forward with some of these programmes in 2020/21, we have been able to report the work we have done to ensure equality of opportunity and to promote diversity within squash. I was thrilled when Scottish Squash were awarded the Intermediate Level of the Equality Standard for Sport. I would like to thank our funding partners whose funds have facilitated these activities and the clubs, coaches, players and executive team, who have worked with us to pilot these programmes.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Whilst squash in Scotland has been limited over the past eighteen months, we have been delighted to see the positive response to *BounceBack* competitions for under 18's. Thank you to clubs and competition organisers for embracing this initiative and encouraging our young players back onto court with these fun and engaging competitions. I look forward to us being able to provide a similar opportunity for all age groups in the coming months. I also thank those involved in the expansion of coach accreditation, through the introduction of online development opportunities. I thank the Board Director and Chair of the Competition Advisory Group, Alan Marshall, for his support of the executive team and his leadership in bringing this competitive activity to life.

Performance

Scottish Squash players were some of the first performance athletes back on court as we worked with **sportscotland**, the Scottish Institute of Sport and Oriam to support players during these difficult times. Our professional players have now been able to return to the PSA World Tour and continue their preparation for the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in 2022. We were delighted to expand the coaching team to support us in these efforts, as Director of Squash, Paul Bell, recruited the extremely experienced and talented David Pearson as Assistant Doubles Coach in the run up to the Commonwealth Games. In addition, building upon her outstanding input into the team over the past three years, Kylie Lindsay moved into a full-time senior coaching position within the team. I am delighted with the focus and resilience of the performance team during these difficult times. I am grateful for the guidance of Graeme Jones as Performance Director on the Scottish Squash Board, and for the leadership of Paul Bell. I hope you feel as excited as I do, to follow the progress of our talented young squad in years to come.

Commercial Support

This year we recruited Marc Hope to the Scottish Squash Board of Directors. Marc has worked with the team to build a commercial strategy and to lead a communication drive to raise the profile of the sport and generate greater commercial income. The focus this year has been to raise awareness and to develop partnerships around the Springfield Scottish Squash Open in Inverness in September and to promote the European Masters Championships, coming to Edinburgh in June 2022. We thank Marc for his efforts and for laying the foundation to enable the future growth of the sport. We continue to work with World Squash, European Squash, the PSA and fellow national squash governing bodies to raise the profile of the sport globally.

In conclusion I would like to commend those partners and friends who have driven specific areas of the sport and everyone whose contribution, time and energy has a positive impact on squash in Scotland. It is my sincere hope that at the time of reading this report, we will all be back on court, playing the sport that we all love so dearly.

I look forward to once again working with our friends Keith Gristwood and Jason Broadberry to continue to support the rebound and growth of racketball in Scotland through RASTA.

I am also looking forward to re-connecting with our fabulous team of Scottish referees. I thank Jim Hay for his efforts over the year in linking with European and World Squash and leading the development of referees in Scotland, and for World Squash for their development of online resources to support and develop our referee pool.

Thanks too to our Chief Executive, Maggie Still, and the executive team for all their time, effort, knowledge, skills and flexibility during this difficult year.

Once again, for those who have helped in any way, I extend my personal thanks and hope that you will continue to support us looking forward into 2021/22.



Mark Adderley

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Adderley', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

President, Scottish Squash Limited

PLAYERS



PLAYERS

The past twelve months have been challenging for professional athletes. Their ability to work has been taken away from them and for a lot it has led to them retiring from the sport to find a more sustainable career. Our athletes have demonstrated their commitment and love for the sport and as a result we still have a full squad of players who have smashed through so many barriers and are now desperate to get back out competing on the World Tour again.

Our aim of the past twelve months has been to turn a very dramatic negative into a positive opportunity. As the majority of the performance group are still early in their career, we have had the ability to really focus on helping players to develop and improve in all areas of their game. When things do eventually get back to normal they can be confident that they have put the work in, made huge improvements in their game and have the skillset to go and progress quickly. This has only been possible through the elite athlete exemption we were offered by **sportscotland** and its Institute of Sport which has enabled the athletes who met the criteria to return to training in Oriam when so many other squash players have been unable to. This has also been invaluable to the World Tour athletes - Greg Lobban, Alan Clyne & Lisa Aitken - who were able to get back competing at the end of 2021 and were exempt from quarantine in order to travel to compete in events which have mostly been held in Egypt.

It has truly been a collaboration to continue running the performance department through the pandemic. We were very proud to be one of the first sports to get back training again after many hours of work from the staff, Board, Oriam and **sportscotland** to get the necessary guidance accepted by The Scottish Government. The athletes maximised the opportunity to get back into training and have been consistently training since, working hard every day to improve their game with the coaches and support staff despite not having any opportunities to compete. We are excited to see the young players get back out competing and to see how all the hard work has impacted their performances, early signs are looking very encouraging. Despite the disappointment of missing out on a year of competing, the time spent maturing and developing their game should put Rory Stewart, Fergus Richards, Alasdair Prott, John Meehan, Martin Ross, Andrew Glen, Alison Thomson, Georgia Adderley & Katriona Allen in a great position moving forward.

All of the performance players are focused on competing at the highest level which is the PSA World Tour, all of the players are active members of the tour and are travelling to play events to challenge themselves against the worlds

best and climb the world rankings. It has been really encouraging to see the support of clubs in Scotland who have been hosting PSA events over the past couple of years which really helps our athletes to gain more experience. Events are already scheduled at SSRC, The Grange as well as the Springfield Scottish Open in Inverness which is fantastic for the athletes who get the chance to compete on home soil and something they really value and are deeply grateful for.



PLAYERS

During the past twelve months our attention has been firmly on next years Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. The players are always focused on becoming the best singles players they can be and train with that ambition every day. We believe that we will have a great chance at picking up medals in the singles events this time around with Greg, Alan and Lisa all showing they are capable of beating the best players in the world on their day. Doubles is also a big opportunity for us to win medals. We have ramped up our doubles practice in preparation and are working



towards selecting the best pairings to represent Scotland at the games. We are blessed with fantastic doubles players but unfortunately only a few assured places to compete at the games so we are working hard to ensure every player has an opportunity to prove what they are capable of. We believe that we are in a great position to succeed at the games this time and despite the difficulties that face us with preparations for doubles, everyone is fully committed to leaving no stone unturned. To support our preparations, we have appointed world renowned coach, David Pearson as our Assistant Doubles Coach who will bring his vast knowledge and medal winning experience into the coaching team.

Another positive from the past twelve months has been the emergence of our young players who have transitioned from the junior to senior game behind closed doors. They have developed the professionalism and an understanding of the hard work required to succeed at the highest level and it will be exciting to see their progress over the coming years.



Our production line of players is vitally important, this group have suffered massively during the past twelve months with very limited squash and no opportunity to compete during a vital time for their squash and physical development. We believe strongly that in order to maximise the potential of any young player, their coach and the environment they train in on a day to day basis is crucial, so in order to support our pathway athletes and coaches fully we have made some organisational changes. Kylie Lindsay is now working full time as a senior performance coach with a large part of her remit being to lead the pathway providing support to the next generation of players and their coaches. Kevin Moran has also transitioned into a newly created role of coaching & competitions manager. Kevin will play a vital role in supporting and developing coaching across the country so we can be sure that we have more coaches but also the best coaches nurturing our young players.

We have a very exciting twelve months ahead. It is fantastic to see how dedicated every member of the performance team and the athletes are to becoming the best they can be and whatever happens it is going to be a special year for everyone who is involved with and supports Scottish Squash.

2020/21 Achievements



Professional Squash Association

Men's Rankings*

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| Greg Lobban: | 21 |
| Alan Clyne: | 40 |
| Rory Stewart: | 119 |
| Fergus Richards | 303 |
| Alasdair Prott | 388 |
| Chris Leiper | 432 |
| Jon Geekie | 438 |
| John Meehan | 605 |
| Andrew Glen | 640 |
| Martin Ross | 644 |



Professional Squash Association

Women's Rankings*

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Lisa Aitken: | 40 |
| Alison Thomson: | 79 |
| Georgia Adderley: | 99 |
| Katriona Allen | 136 |
| Catherine Holland | 342 |



*Rankings as at July 2021

CLUBS



CLUBS

We wanted to take this opportunity to reflect on a particularly challenging year for club squash in 2020-21, recognise and thank you for the collaborative approach that we – as the governing body – have been proud to be a part of in order to safely begin the phased return of the sport, and to look ahead to the priorities for 2021-22.

Following the launch of a new four year strategy ('Squash – A Sport for Health') in 2019, the Club Development Team moved in to 2020 by continuing to develop and pilot a number of focused club development programmes.

It is these recruitment programmes, G/RLS DO SQUASH (including H//T SQUASH) schools**squash** and Going for Gold that clubs and coaches can use to form the basis of the strategy for supporting clubs to rebuild membership and attract new participants as we look ahead to 2021-22.

Thanks to the ACT/VATORS, Jenn Saldanha & Ailsa Polworth, the H//T SQUASH pilot started with a bang in early 2020 and was receiving great feedback until the national lockdown struck in March.

Despite this, and as we have seen throughout the squash community across Scotland, we were able to adapt and move the H//T SQUASH programme online to create 'H//T SQUASH from Home', an online H//T SQUASH workout helping people to stay connected and remain active throughout the pandemic.

Similarly, the squash community enjoyed the early release of the schools**squash** Resource Pack which was the focus of our Squash PE from Home series during the initial national lockdown.

Since the re-introduction of unrestricted under-18 squash, we started to re-connect with clubs and their local schools to re-introduce schools**squash** and the two brilliant pilot clubs (Forres Squash Club & Hamilton Squash Club) that we are delivering the Going for Gold programme in partnership with have resumed their plans and programmes.

When it is safe to do so and guidance allows, H//T SQUASH will also return within a club setting. Looking ahead to 2021-22, we would encourage any club to reach out to the Club Development Team to explore the opportunities that these programmes can provide.



As clubs start to re-open and our coaching and competition network start to explore opportunities for play, depending on local circumstances and in line with Scottish Government guidance, a number have explored the new opportunities available via the enhanced services being provided through the partnership with SportyHQ. Please do connect with the Club Development Team if any of these opportunities are of interest to your club as we move towards 2021.

While we all recognise that the current guidance from Scottish Government continues to pose significant challenges for clubs and members, we wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for the collaborative approach that has been evident to support the phased return of the sport. The engagement from clubs, particularly via the club support forum and the regular forum video calls introduced at the start of the pandemic, has been a crucial part of this approach.

The club support forum has been such a valuable way of communicating across the sport and we are keen to grow the club support forum community beyond the pandemic, so please get in touch if your club are interested in joining the forum in 2021-22.

Another key and ongoing priority has been to support clubs to access any financial support available to alleviate the current financial challenges that many are facing.

While the Scottish Government's Strategic Framework Business Fund has supported some clubs in this area, we have continued to liaise with **sportscotland** and Scottish Government to provide evidence of where the gaps exist for squash clubs and facilities and in order to re-direct support, influence and access future assistance.

We are committed to playing our role at a national level and would like to thank the clubs for all the work that they have undertaken at a local level in this regard. We will continue to work with clubs on an individual basis and based on the feedback from the club impact surveys that have been issued, and we would ask that clubs continue to share the details of any applications and learning in the club support forum so that other clubs and facilities can benefit from such insight.

We took the decision to waive all membership fees for the 2020-21 membership year. In terms of membership, the challenges for the governing body are similar to those that member clubs are continuing to face – and we remain as committed to you as you have been to your members, so we continued to offer all membership services in 2020-21. As we move forward and look ahead to the 2021-22 membership year, we recognise that the sport, and in particular the many clubs and facilities, will face significant challenges to rebuild participation and membership levels. Therefore, we are currently developing a recovery plan that we can activate at a national level and that we can encourage clubs and facilities to embrace on a local level.

We would also like to thank all clubs for their positive engagement in a number of promotional activities that we coordinated across 2020-21, to continue to try and engage members to remain connected with the sport during periods where we were unable to access the squash court.

World Squash Day in 2020 proved a popular example through our Squash Around Scotland competition. We asked members of Scotland's squash community to post a photo or video on social media with a squash racket or ball in hand near an eye-catching Scottish landmark. There were some fantastic contributions and to pick a winner was not easy at all! The winning entry was this stunning image below of Inverness junior squash player Jessica Craig-Gould at Culloden Battlefield.



Vollee

22 - 26
SEPTEMBER
2021

Inverness
Tennis & Squash Club

PSA CHALLENGER
TOUR

THE 2021
Springfield
.co.uk
SCOTTISH
SQUASH
OPEN



ORIGINAL DESIGN BY:

Callum Smith
Age 9, Glasgow

DEVELOPED BY - OLDMANSREY.COM

COMPETITIONS

COMPETITIONS

Overview

We believe that competitions will continue to be the heart of the sport in Scotland. Following the comprehensive review and restructure of the national competition pathway for squash in Scotland in 2017/18, we believe we have a strong competition structure which will support squash to bounce back from the pandemic and to provide people from all backgrounds and abilities to find a relevant competition experience.

As we emerge from the restrictions, we must provide further support to our volunteers and competition organisers who provide opportunities across Scotland so that everyone can experience the enjoyment of competitions. After an extremely challenging 2020/21 squash season we still need to take the opportunity to thank the volunteers and competition organisers who delivered competitive opportunities at various points while restrictions permitted.

BounceBack

The **BounceBack** competition programme was launched in November 2020 as we emerged from the first lockdown with the aim of kick-starting competitive squash within the junior game. The **BounceBack** programme was focused on encouraging players to return to competition opportunity in a more relaxed environment while closely supporting organisers to deliver safe competitions in line with Scottish Government guidelines.

We're pleased to have sanctioned more than thirteen junior **BounceBack** competitions which took place across five regions and has supported more than three hundred under 18's to return to squash competitions.

Plans have started to extend the **BounceBack** programme into the senior and masters game when squash returns and while restrictions continue to make it difficult to return to the full national competition pathway.



2021 Springfield Scottish Squash Open

The 2021 Springfield Scottish Squash Open will take place at Inverness Tennis & Squash Club between the 22nd – 26th September. The Professional Squash Association Challenger Tour event will continue to feature both a male and female event offering equal prize money.

We would like to thank our headline partners, Springfield Properties, for their continued support to squash in Scotland and supporting us to continue to develop the Scottish Open.

We extend our thanks to the local and national partners who are supporting us in the development and delivery of the 2021 championship including The Highland Council and High Life Highland.

Keep up to date on all event information via the official event website - <http://scottishsquashopen.com/home/>



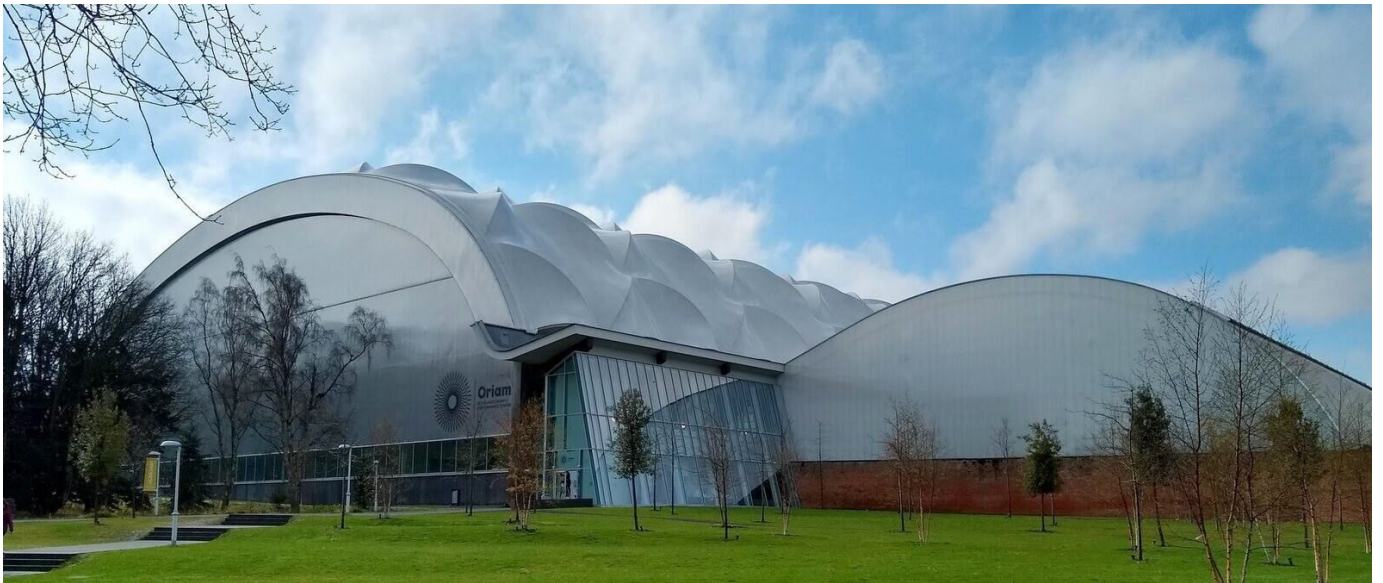
2022 European Masters Championships

We are pleased to be able to confirm that the 2022 European Masters Championships will take place in Edinburgh following the postponement of the 2021 event as a result of the pandemic.

Plans continue to be developed for this event and will be confirmed shortly.

We look forward to working with local and national partners to deliver an event across the city of Edinburgh and one which can support the re-engagement of European squash.

Keep a look out on our website for further information.



Refereeing

In 2021 the World Squash Federation and Professional Squash Association launched [World Squash Officiating](#), an online education and appraisal portal designed to standardise officiating qualifications worldwide.

Scottish Squash welcome this programme developed by the WSF and PSA and look forward to working in partnership with them to implement the WSO framework across Scotland and drive a strategy to increase the quality and quantity of officials within squash in Scotland. The initial priority for Scottish Squash will be to focus on transitioning current registered referees across to the new framework before moving on to implement a strategy to develop new referees.





COACHING

COACHING

Scottish Squash are proud to have once again seen strong engagement across our coach education and development programmes throughout the 2020/21 season, albeit with the challenges added by the pandemic.

We are continually grateful to the squash coaching network across Scotland who continue to support the development of squash opportunities across communities.

Earlier in 2021, we were delighted to confirm Kevin Moran's appointment into a newly created role as Coaching & Competitions Manager. We look forward to connecting further with the workforce as we progress out of the pandemic and we would encourage all coaches across Scotland to connect with Kevin.



Coach Education

Working in partnership with **sportscotland**, we are pleased to have implemented a new virtual learning system to underpin our education and training programmes.

Brightspace will allow squash to prepare for future learning and development needs, and service a more technology-focused population. The implementation of Brightspace across our education and training programmes is a partnership approach working with **sportscotland** and a number of Scottish governing bodies of sport allowing the ability for future shared learning across the sector.

As a result of the pandemic related restrictions, Brightspace provided the opportunity to continue to educate coaches online and remotely during the pandemic. We're pleased to have delivered two online/remote level 1 coaching courses in 2021 to approximately twenty five candidates.

Going forward, we'll be carrying out a review of this way of learning to understand what is most appropriate for candidates learning and development post pandemic.

Coach Development

The lockdown periods associated with the pandemic provided the opportunity to engage further with the coaching network. Like a number of organisations, we turned to online learning to continue to engage with the workforce and provide development opportunities.

In addition to supporting the workforce across the squash community, we're also pleased to have played our part to support the development of coaches across the wider sports sector and also coaches from other countries.

Our thanks go to each individual who engaged and contributed to these learning opportunities as well as the numerous tutors, coaches and individuals who led sessions and shared their experiences.

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE



GOVERNANCE

Governance Audit

In 2020, Scottish Squash completed a successful development audit review carried out by KPMG and on behalf of our lead investor, **sportscotland**. We continue to satisfy the required level of governance arrangements as determined by **sportscotland** and in order to safeguard public investment and deliver suitable outcomes. While some low and moderate priority level recommendations were made to support the governing bodies' continued development, the review noted progress in six of the audit areas (governance, financial management, risk management, planning & reporting, HR management & policies) and highlighted three particular areas of good practice:

- The Board holds a diverse skillset which helps facilitate consideration of legal, financial and HR matters within the SGB;
- There are sub committees, advisory groups and working groups established to feed into the Board on specific matters; and
- The transition to Xero has increased the ease of financial reporting and has made more information available to the Board.

Equality Standard for Sport

In early 2021, Scottish Squash were also successful in achieving the Intermediate Level of the Equality Standard for Sport. The Equality Standard is a framework for sport that helps address the inequalities that exist within the sports sector.

Scottish Squash have been on a journey through the levels of the Equality Standard for Sport for several years, having achieved Foundation in 2015 and Preliminary in 2017. In achieving the Intermediate Level, Scottish Squash have been able to demonstrate progress against the following outcomes of the Equality Standard for Sport:



- The organisation can demonstrate that it is implementing and reviewing the equality action plan and has collected updated profile data;
- The organisations internal policies and procedures consider the impact on people who share protected characteristics; and
- The organisation is working towards increasing the diversity of people participating/using its services (members/participants).

Scottish Squash aim to lead by example, rooting out discrimination and bias in any squash club or facility across Scotland, ultimately driving a culture change making squash, and squash clubs, open and inclusive of everyone, regardless of their age, ability or disability, ethnicity or nationality, gender or gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, religion, sex or sexual orientation. Where discrimination and bias does exist, it will be challenged and addressed. Scottish Squash are committed and will continue to work with all our diversity and inclusion partners to make this possible.

MEMBERSHIP & FINANCE

Membership

The work of the Scottish Squash Membership Working Group continues and following the update at the 2020 AGM, a full consultation process was completed in early 2021. All regions, league organising committees and clubs were invited to an individual consultation meeting to share feedback on the proposed 'Squash in Scotland' membership structure. The 'Squash in Scotland' structure being proposed would see the transition from the current league team fee based structure to a club and individual tiered based membership structure, where clubs, players, coaches, referees and supporters can opt to join at the level most appropriate to their involvement in the sport.

A review of the consultation findings confirmed that there is a majority support for the proposed new structure, so the Membership Working Group are continuing with plans to finalise the 'Squash in Scotland' structure and with a view to its implementation for the 2022-23 membership year.

Scottish Squash would like to thank everyone who contributed to the consultation for their time and input, and ask that regions and clubs stay connected whilst we confirm the next steps of its implementation.

Finance

The Scottish Squash company accounts for the period ending 31st March 2021 are available for the Annual General Meeting. Similar to its member clubs, the impact of the ongoing pandemic have caused uncertainty and challenges across the finances of the governing body.

In order to support its member clubs, Scottish Squash waived all club membership fees for the 2020-21 membership year. This was made possible primarily by the Board of Directors agreeing to reduce the unrestricted reserves to the lower end of the policy range. There were also other efficiencies made across the 2020-21 financial year, and - with the continued support and flexibility offered by our lead investor, **sportscotland**, and our title sponsor, Springfield Properties, across the 2020-21 investment - Scottish Squash were able to retain all staff members and continue to offer all membership services.

£15,000 was utilised from the unrestricted reserves and this reflects the £14,621 deficit posted for the year ending 31st March 2021, closing the unrestricted reserves at the lower end of the policy range (£120,000-£147,000) at £121,792.

As we move forward and look ahead to the 2021-22 membership year, we recognise that the sport, and in particular the many clubs and facilities, will face significant challenges to rebuild participation and membership levels.

Therefore, Scottish Squash are currently devising a recovery plan - incorporating an application to the **sportscotland** administered SGB Recovery Fund - that we can activate at a national level and empower and enable clubs to shape according to their specific circumstances and requirements.

Further uncertainty and budget challenges will no doubt lie ahead, but we are pleased to be able to confirm that **sportscotland**, our lead investor, remain committed to our investment agreement for the current 2019-23 strategic cycle. Together with the continuing support of Springfield Properties and other partners, we are confident that we can retain a viable financial position to support the recovery of the sport in the short and long term.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

On behalf of Scottish Squash, I would like to share this conclusion to the annual report and hopefully bring a close to what has been a strange and extremely difficult eighteen months for us all. In last year's annual report I said:

"Whilst we are yet to understand the full impact of COVID-19 on the sport of squash in Scotland, I hope that we can continue to work together to find a way through this crisis and emerge stronger as a team."

At Scottish Squash we have listened carefully to the squash community. We have shared the frustration in relation to the devastating impact of Covid-19 restrictions on the sport. We are extremely grateful to those of you who remained patient and positive and continued to responsibly follow government legislation. We thank you for your continued engagement and teamwork and we look forward to working with you during the coming months as the sport recovers.

In this, the most unusual of years, I have been extremely proud of the amazing team at Scottish Squash, who have remained positive and supportive throughout. Scottish Squash has had a clear focus on preparing the sport to emerge from this pandemic as strong as possible. The team has remained fully operational, with all but the performance team working remotely.

We were quick to grasp every opportunity to get players back on court. One of the first opportunities was with professional players. Thanks to the great partnership work with **sportscotland**, the Scottish Institute of Sport and Oriam, we were one of the first sports to put protocols in place and gain approval for a safe return for our professional players. I would personally like to recognise the efforts of Paul Bell, in his role as Director of Squash, for guiding the Scottish Squash players and ensuring that the players remain compliant and able to retain this privileged position. Paul has been very ably supported by Kylie Lindsay, in her now full time role as Senior Performance Coach. We are also delighted with the recent addition to the performance team of the world renowned David Pearson who will be working with the players and assisting Paul, with a focus on Doubles, in the run up to the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

The cancellation of a second year of end of season Scottish representation was a major blow for players. However, we are planning for the full return of representative competition in the 2021/22 season. In addition, we are very excited about the forthcoming 2021 Springfield Scottish Squash Open in Inverness, in September, and the European Masters Championships, in June 2022, in Edinburgh.

The team have had a sharp eye on the impact of the pandemic upon our young players, many of whom will have been devastated not to be able to play the sport that they love. We have a special message to young players to stay positive and focussed as the sport continues to reopen over the coming months. We are delighted with the popularity of the *BounceBack* competitions and offer a huge thanks to clubs and coaches for providing these competitive opportunities for our young players.

Alongside the work with performance players, we consistently engaged with The Scottish Government, both through our partners **sportscotland**, and directly to make the positive case for the return of squash. We have prepared clear communications for the sport in response to changes in government legislation. We set up the club support forum to answer questions and to offer support for clubs through fellow club managers and through the Scottish Squash and **sportscotland** team. We have also produced new digital content to support players and keep people engaged wherever possible. We have launched new initiatives as restrictions eased for under 18s and to keep people fit and ready for a return to squash.

We are now at the point whereby the sector wide approach being taken to the easing of restrictions has enabled a return to play for squash in Level 0. We urge a safe and cautious approach to the return to the game. Please do stay connected, and let us work together to ensure that everyone is fully supported in reopening the sport. Another huge thank you to clubs at this point, in particular to the Covid-19 Officers. We appreciate you taking on this new role which aims to make people aware of what is required during this time, and to encourage players to take personal responsibility to stay safe.

Over the past eighteen months we have experienced a few changes within the Scottish Squash team. I am sure you will all join me in wishing David Fallon, the former Scottish Squash Head of Development, all the very best in his new role with Scottish Athletics. David's departure led to Allan McKay being repositioned as Director of Development and Kevin Moran recruited to the position of Coaching and Competitions Manager. Cara Shearer has continued to impress in her now full time role as Club Development Manager with a focus on women and girls. Cara has recently been joined in a part time capacity by Jack Brodie as Club Development Manager. Jack will focus on bringing more young people into squash. An important element of each of these roles aims to support clubs in encouraging greater diversity and inclusion within the squash playing community. In this respect, we were delighted over recent months to be awarded with the Intermediate Level of the Equality Standard for Sport. This is a huge achievement for the sport and I thank all of our partners, clubs and coaches for working with us to embed an open and welcoming culture within squash.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

I would like to thank the Scottish Squash Board of Directors for their expertise and skills. I would also like to recognise Garry McKay for his excellent work as Chief Operating Officer, successfully guiding us through the recent governance audit. In this respect, I would like to also recognise the work of Morva McKenzie who has once again ensured that Scottish Squash remain 100% compliant in terms of child protection and welfare.

Commercial

I am grateful for the continued support and flexibility of **sportscotland** during this past difficult months. Our challenge has been to balance the **sportscotland** investment with additional investment to help us to grow the sport, support our performance players and to ensure that the sport is well governed. This year we could see the pressure that clubs were under and we quickly sought to remove any burden of membership fees for the 2020/21 squash season. We aim to do this again for the 2021/22 season to help clubs through the recovery process.

I would like to personally thank Sandy Adam and his amazing team at Springfield Properties, and the Adam Family Foundation, for their incredible and continued support. Sandy agreed to greater flexibility in how the funding was utilised. This supported Scottish Squash players during the toughest of times and enabled them to continue to follow their dreams.

This year we have been joined by Marc Hope on the Scottish Squash Board of Directors. Marc has a wealth of experience in the sports industry and specifically in commercial and marketing. Marc has generously shared his knowledge and contacts and is working with Scottish Squash to develop a strategic approach to marketing and raising the profile of the sport. Marc introduced us to our partnership consultant, Thomas Greenwood, and together they have been systematically approaching potential sponsors. Huge thanks to Marc and Tom for all of their efforts in transforming the commercial approach of the sport and to all of our sponsors and commercial partners for your continued support during these difficult times.

My thanks go to Gordon Mavor and his team for their focussed and detailed support with the Scottish Squash accounts, as the team once again delivered on budget.

I would also like to thank Andy Weston of Weston Sports Marketing for his service over the past five years as Andy steps down to follow a new career path. Andy has been instrumental in preparing squash content and bringing many positive stories into mainstream media. We are actively seeking a new media support partner to help us in continuing to raise the profile of the sport.

I would particularly like to recognise the support and guidance of the Scottish Squash Board of Directors, led by the Scottish Squash President and Chair of the Board, Mark Adderley.

I am grateful to the Scottish Squash executive team for their continued energy, focus, and quality delivery. The team has worked hard to both effectively support and sustain our continued growth and to realise our future ambitions and potential as a world leading squash nation. Team members have taken on additional responsibilities this year and for that I would like to extend my personal appreciation.

A huge thank you also goes to our network of regional committees, clubs, coaches, referees and volunteers as without you the sport could not continue. Thank you for responding positively to information requests and for continuing to support us in our efforts to reopen the sport.

Finally, I would like to thank the performance players for once again being great role models. Your focus in retaining your fitness and drive during the pandemic has been inspiring and we look forward to following your safe return to the PSA tour.

Please all stay safe and well. Enjoy your return to squash! I look forward to catching up with you all over the coming months.



Maggie Still, Chief Executive





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