

SCOTTISH SQUASH ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23



SCOTTISH
SQUASH



TOGETHER FOR SQUASH IN SCOTLAND



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Dear Members,

Welcome to the 2022-23 Annual Report. The report reflects another year of growth and recovery following the Covid – 19 global pandemic.

Scottish Squash has entered a new 2023 -2027 strategic cycle, which offered the opportunity to reflect and review the company vision, values and overarching objectives. We asked people within squash in Scotland to tell us what was working and what we could do better. The new strategy 'Together for Squash in Scotland' reflected what we heard from members, players, volunteers, parents, coaches and referees. Our members value transparency, inclusivity, empowerment and collaboration, and these values will underpin all that we do across squash in Scotland. We want to drive forwards these values as we grow the sport through three core areas:

- **Inclusion** - encouraging more women and girls and young people to try squash and to stay in the sport.
- **Player pathway** – embed an easy to navigate, person centred player pathway.
- **Leadership** – encouraging all in squash and Scotland to work together to grow the sport and achieve excellence.

In my introduction to the Strategic Plan, I urge the squash community in Scotland to work together and help the sport to thrive.

Our Board and executive want to build upon the great work delivered through the 2019-23 strategic plan, and guide the sport on its continued recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. We want everyone that is passionate about our sport to pull together to help squash recover and generate momentum all the way from grass roots to our high-performance athletes. We want to create a culture where everyone is working together for the good of the sport.

You will see many examples of this within the Annual Report. My reflections and highlights from the report include:

- After several cycles of non-conversion, Greg and Rory emerging victorious from the dreaded Commonwealth Games Bronze Medal play off.
- Women placing 8th in the World at the World Women's Team Championships in Malaysia and winning division 2 at the European Team Championships in Finland, securing promotion back to division 1 for 2023-24.
- The return of the Springfield Scottish Squash Open in 2023
- Four Players in the top 50 of the PSA rankings
- Thrive Coaches working together to underpin the junior player pathway
- Over 100 new women and girls sustained in the sport through club delivery of HIIT Squash
- Parents and young players fundraising and competing in the World Junior Team and Individual Championships in Australia.
- Runners up for the 2022 national sports governing body of the year from Team Scotland

So many fantastic achievements, and others, which will mean so much to so many, and for which we should all be extremely proud!

I would like to thank you all for your contribution to these successes. Thank you to everyone who coaches, referees, and administers the game, and to our CEO, Maggie Still, and the staff team, without whom we wouldn't be where we are.

I would also like to thank my fellow Board members and other volunteers from the squash community in Scotland who have contributed to our Board advisory groups. We appreciate all the time and effort you all give to the sport we love.

We would like to thank **sportscotland** for their continuing support and guidance, as well as our amazing sponsor Springfield Properties, and the other organisations with whom we have built successful relationships in Scotland and across the world.

Well done for all that has been achieved in 2022 / 2023 and we look forward to more success in the forthcoming season.

Paul Macari,
Scottish Squash President

Players

Having reached the end of a strategic cycle, there has been time to reflect on the achievements of Scotland's elite squash players. During a period which was disrupted by a pandemic, and subsequent recovery from the pandemic, Scotland's squash players have performed exceptionally well.

The year started with the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. Six players were selected to represent Team Scotland. All of the players earned their place on the team with fantastic performances at the World Doubles in Glasgow. Alan Clyne, Greg Lobban, Douglas Kempself, Rory Stewart, Lisa Aitken & Georgia Adderley shone on court securing medals for Scotland. That experience helped the group to develop a fantastic team spirit which ensured a fantastic experience for the players in Glasgow.

While playing in the Commonwealth Games is an achievement highly valued by squash players, the players were ambitious and aimed to win a medal - achieving a target set in agreement with **sportscotland**. The singles event provided a great platform for the players to gain experience and showcase what they could do against the world's best. Greg Lobban put together some great performances to achieve his best finish in a Commonwealth Games singles event, reaching the quarter finals before losing out to the eventual bronze medallist. Georgia Adderley got her first taste of the big time taking on Joelle King on the glass court in the last 16. This was a fantastic learning experience for her. The name on everyone's lips, however, was Rory Stewart. This was a true breakthrough event for him as he beat number 4 seed Patrick Rooney in the last 16, against all odds. He then had the match of the games against James Willstrop in the quarter finals, narrowly missing out in the deciding game, but demonstrating to the world what he was capable of in the process.



Week two brought the eagerly anticipated doubles events, which the team had high hopes for, after the amazing performances at the World Doubles just a few months prior. Expectations were high for the doubles event, as every nation believes they have a chance to win a medal if things go their way. It was a nervy start, but the Scottish players managed to get 4 of our 5 teams through to the quarter-final stage. Quarter finals day was tough for the players, with eliminations leaving Greg and Rory as the only remaining pair.

For those that were eliminated, reaching the quarter final stage of a Commonwealth Games is a fantastic achievement and something that they can be rightly proud of.

Greg & Rory faced England in the semi-finals of the men's doubles, but unfortunately missed out in an incredibly tight match, leaving them in the bronze medal match.

The preparation time before the match was crucial in allowing the players to reset. Greg and Rory went on to claim the Bronze medal, but a highlight of the games was seeing a group of friends come together to support each other through the lows and final high. The end result was that Scotland won its first Commonwealth medal in 24 years.

A big part of the last cycle's activity was to try and encourage more women and girls to get involved in squash.

The achievements of the squad since re-establishing the Scotland women's team have been amazing, and in December they were able to step up once again and participate in the Women's World Team Championships for the first time in 10 years. The players performed brilliantly, beating squash heavyweights Germany and Australia in the pool to make it through to the quarter finals. Unfortunately, during the pool match with Australia, Lisa sustained a severe injury to her knee, which is likely to keep her out of the game for some time. The team were rewarded with the opportunity to take on hosts Egypt - a team comprised of the world number 1, 2 & 3, live on TV. That was a step too far, but to finish eighth in the world was fantastic. Add this to the seventh place finish of the men's team means that Scotland can boast two teams in the world top eight.

Players (cont.)

Supporting players to compete on the PSA World Tour is where the bulk of performance resources go, and it was another brilliant year for Scotland's players. Lisa, despite injury in December became the highest ranked Scottish player, achieving a career high of 21 in the world. Four Scottish players were in the world top 50 after Georgia Adderley & Rory Stewart broke into that elite club for the first time in their careers. Alasdair Prott continues his steady progress up the ranking, achieving a top 150 ranking after winning both of the PSA events that were based in Scotland at Heriot-Watt University and Oban Squash Club respectively. It is great to see the number of PSA events in Scotland growing, as they provide valuable opportunities for players. The return of the Springfield Scottish Open in September will provide opportunities for Scotland's most talented players to challenge themselves against a strong international field.

Alba Storm were back competing this season, hoping that they could complete their first full season in the league since they joined in 2019. With a new home at Newlands LTC, it was fantastic to see the club embrace the hosting of world class squash on a regular basis. Every home game was packed by a passionate crowd who willed the team to victory in every match, and it was great to see the players giving back their time to inspire the next generation during the clinics that ran before each match. There was lots of positivity around the PSL fixtures, as a result of everyone who got involved and came along to support the team. That support helped to boost the performances on-court, leading to Alba Storm pushing for the title until the end of the final fixture, where they were just pipped to the post by defending champions RAC. A second place finish was a great reward for the team's efforts.

While fully committed to helping our senior players achieve their goals, a key aim in our strategy is to develop junior players. This will be supported by developing coaches to provide support for young players in their club environment, with their club coach. The THRIVE coach development programme has grown from strength to strength over the past two years and is leading to notable progress in the pathway. Key events in the last year included the British Junior Championships, which 27 Scottish players participated in, with 10 players achieving a top 10 finish. The Scottish Junior Open was back to full strength again and Scottish players competed well against some of the world's best players, with three podium finishes. Representing Scotland is always an ambition for young players and they once again did us proud, competing against some of the world's top squash nations. The U19 mixed team finished fifth at the European Championships and the U13 & 15 teams both took the bronze medal in the 5 Nations Championships.

After an amazing career, Alan Clyne decided to retire from professional squash and begin a new chapter as a coach. Alan has been a stalwart for Scottish Squash for the last 15 years, and he has been a role model to many young Scottish players. His professionalism has been outstanding, from a humble junior career he dedicated himself to the highest of standards and challenged himself every day to be better. This helped him to achieve a career high ranking of 24 in the world. He represented Scotland at four Commonwealth Games and became World Doubles Champion. Alan will most certainly be missed, as he has started his role as Assistant Coach at Princeton in the USA. Alan hasn't hung up his Scotland vest just yet and was undefeated at the European Team Championships, with some fantastic performances. Congratulations to Alan on a truly magnificent professional career.



Clubs

It has been encouraging to see squash return within clubs for a full year and work to continue to recover from the impact caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Equally, it has been a year where further challenges have impacted the club environment as we continue to navigate our way through an energy crises and impact from the cost-of-living crises.

Many clubs have risen to the challenges with optimism, innovation and continued resilience and worked hard to ensure squash opportunities exist for everyone across local communities.

Throughout 2022-23 we have transitioned the Club Forum into a new education and networking opportunity for clubs to develop knowledge, share best practice and connect with like-minded people and the feedback on this forum continues to be positive.

Throughout 2022-23 there have been four facilitated club forum calls led by current and new partners aimed at supporting the development of clubs. Below is a summary of some of the education that has been delivered.

- Club Fundraising and Club Sustainability session (delivered by Bridge of Allan Sports Club)
- Legal Structures and Charitable Status (delivered by Club Development)
- Creating a pathway for Women & Girls (delivered by Inverness Tennis & Squash Club)
- Social media success for squash clubs (delivered by Barry Thomson, Marketing & PR Director at PMPR Excellence)
- 29% engagement from affiliated clubs

Clubs are able to access a recording from all Club Forum calls and watch back through our [Club Toolkit](#). Going forward, we aim to continue to facilitate a Club Forum call every quarter and we'd encourage all clubs to engage in some capacity.



Young Ambassadors

This year saw the establishment and launch of our first Young Ambassadors programme and we're delighted to have recruited 10 candidates to be part of the first cohort. This programme aims to provide a forum for young people to have a voice within squash in Scotland and the opportunity to influence the direction and development of the sport.

As we continue to develop the programme, we hope that it will help develop values and behaviours amongst young people and lead to better integration of young people into leadership roles within squash in the future.

Women & Girls

The development and growth of women and girls' squash across Scotland continues as a key development priority for Scottish Squash. Built on excellent work that has already been going on in local clubs and communities, we are witnessing more women and girls been engaged in the sport.

We are hugely thankful to all the passionate people in the local clubs and communities who are championing women and girls squash.

Last year Scottish Squash invested circa £3,000 directly into the women and girls' game to further grow the H//T SQUASH programme aimed at supporting more women to try squash. We're pleased to be working with partners to develop a H//T SQUASH ACT/VATOR award aiming to further expand the programme throughout 2023 and beyond.

Key stats:

- H//T SQUASH programme deployed across 9 clubs/facilities
- The H//T SQUASH ACT/VATOR delivery team grew to 9 ACT/VATORS
- 97% who took part in H//T SQUASH rated their experience of the programme as 'excellent'
- 91% of participants wanted to keep playing squash after they completed the 6 week programme



Competitions

Following the relaxation of covid-19 restrictions earlier in 2022, it has been great to witness a full return to the competitions calendar throughout season 2022-23. Engagement across domestic competitions has continued to rise throughout the season and have returned to similar levels that we had seen pre-pandemic.

From conversations with players and looking closely at our data we're also seen a shift in the way that people want to engage in competitions. The one-day Bronze sanctioned competitions are becoming more popular with a particular focus on creating fun and social environments. It has been particularly encouraging to see an increase in the number of women and girls engaging in competition opportunity through women and girls focused Bronze sanctioned competitions.

Key stats:

- 41 sanctioned competitions throughout the 2022-23 season
- Over 1800 competitions entries
- 23 Bronze sanctioned competitions throughout the 2022-23 season, more than double the number from pre-pandemic levels
- An increase in the number of clubs delivering on the national competition pathway compared to pre-pandemic levels

Looking ahead, we will see the Springfield Scottish Squash Open progress to it's third year since its re-establishment in 2019. The event returns to Inverness and takes place from Wednesday 20th – Sunday 24th September.

We continue to work with partners such as EventScotland and UK Sport to develop a major events strategy for the future and ensure we attract relevant major squash events to the country to align to our pathway and development strategic objectives.



Workforce

Coach Education & Development

Education and development opportunities for coaches remains a key element of our strategy and further improving the relationships with coaches is important to deliver this strategy. Creating a network of well-connected and supported coaches is a key part of our plan and Scottish Squash will continue to work with partners to achieve this.

As squash activity made the gradual return throughout last year, we continued to offer education opportunities to ensure a workforce could continue to be available in local communities to underpin the recovery. It was pleasing to see the return of face-to-face learning throughout 2022-23 and it's important that the move to blended learning achieves the appropriate balance.

- During the year, the team delivered four education courses to 41 candidates.

Throughout 2023-24 we will be establishing a longer-term education and training calendar which includes both formal education opportunities but underpinned with a more comprehensive continuous professional development (CPD) programme. We hope that this will offer much more opportunities for coaches to engage in learning and development and help us create a better network of well-connected coaches.



Referees

Our dedicated volunteer referees and helpers across the sport have been instrumental to supporting the return of competitions. They have underpinned the successful recovery of squash competitions with their enthusiasm, ensuring fair play and enjoyable experiences for all.

Thank you to everyone, whether a qualified referee or enthusiastic volunteer, across Scotland who has supported the delivery of competitions right across Scotland during the season.

As we look ahead to the 2023-24 season work has commenced with the Professional Squash Association and World Squash Federation to implement the new World Squash Officiating framework in Scotland. Some initial challenges were experienced with the platform which has slowed this work down, but we recognise the importance of this transition to connect to partners such as World Squash, European Squash and the PSA.

To progress this area, recent changes in the Scottish Squash staff team have taken place to introduce a Workforce Development Manager responsible for the continued growth and development of coaching but now also to support the development and implementation of a refereeing and volunteer strategy.

The range of European Championship events returned in full this season and it was pleasing to continue to see Scotland represented within the refereeing team at these events. Congratulations to Steffan Gwyn who was selected to referee at the European Championship events.



Governance and Finance

Governance

Following the impact of the pandemic and the lasting change to our working patterns, we have been supporting our staff team's mental health and wellbeing through a new partnership, supported by sportscotland, with the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH). As part of this partnership, we have attended a series of development opportunities exploring and understanding mental health and wellbeing.

We remain committed to our corporate governance and this is underpinned by two Board appointed, non-executive director led sub-committees and two Executive appointed, staff led advisory groups. A number of working groups also existed across the course of 2022-23 with each one being aligned to one of the sub-committees or advisory groups. All of these groups have provided the opportunity for rigorous debate and discussion on the topics where they have delegated authority and each of them continue to provide appropriate and timely reports to the Board. In late 2022, we also successfully passed the external mid-term audit carried out by KPMG. Commissioned by **sportscotland**, the mid-term audit builds on the previous full audit to ensure that we are continuing to appropriately safeguard public investment and deliver suitable outcomes.

We have continued to maintain the Intermediate Level of the Equality for Sport, building on our work to make squash, and squash clubs, as welcoming and inclusive for everyone regardless of their age, ability or disability, ethnicity or nationality, gender or gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, religion, sex or sexual orientation. Our 2019-23 equality action plan and its priorities has continued to be led by the data, and we thank you for your continued support in completing the annual equality monitoring survey.

We combined our annual awards with the 2022 AGM, and were delighted to celebrate the success, achievement and the people across the sport who make the squash in Scotland community what it is. The awards provide a really important opportunity to share best practice and recognise the people who are nominated for their contribution to squash in Scotland.

Finance

Turnover for the year was £822,252 compared to £582,276 in the previous year. The rise reflects the continued recovery across the sport following the material impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had. It also includes funding which was received to support the delivery of the successful World Doubles Championships in April 2022. As a result, the total surpasses all pre-pandemic levels of revenue, showing an increase in the capacity of the sport and a greater ability to drive growth and development.

Income for the year includes the return of membership fees following a two year period where all membership fees were waived in order to support member clubs with their recovery from the pandemic. 2022-23 welcomed the launch of the new Squash in Scotland membership structure and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the clubs and individuals who have supported its introduction. A key part of the new membership structure was to allow the sport to move to a more sustainable model and one that is fit-for-purpose in the modern climate. We are continuing to review its introduction and will strive to make further improvements to enhance the membership experience.

The core investment, aligned to the 2019-23 strategic cycle, from **sportscotland** remained at the same level as 2021-22, and we remain grateful to the national agency for their continued support. We are also thankful for the ongoing support of our title sponsor, The Springfield Group, and all of our other partners whose contributions in 2022-23 have supported various programmes and projects across key strategic areas.

Overall, the Scottish Squash accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 show a deficit of £449. This breakeven position was targeted throughout 2022-23 and we would like to thank Frmwork Ltd. for their ongoing support and advice as our contracted financial management partner. The balance sheet at 31 March 2023 shows a stable position with reserves of £125,876, remaining within the policy range (£123,500-£134,500) as reviewed in 2022-23. The Board, in considering the reserves of the company, are satisfied that there are sufficient reserves and secured future investment in place to allow Scottish Squash to continue operating for the foreseeable future. The full set of Scottish Squash financial statements are available publicly from Companies House.

Chief Executive's Report



At Scottish Squash, we have used the 2022-23 season to fully bounce back from the challenges of the previous season. With the support of partners and the energy and enthusiasm of players, volunteers and staff, we have successfully returned to playing, delivering and developing our sport. We still experienced some disruption and uncertainty, however, through working together, we have emerged and returned to full squash at club and elite level. Thank you to all in the sport for your effort and dedication.

I would once again like to thank the Scottish Squash Board of Directors for generously giving their time and expertise. Thanks to Paul Macari in his first year as Scottish Squash Chair, whose experience and expertise across sport in Scotland has underpinned the growth of squash in 2022-23.

On the Scottish Squash Board of Directors, I would like to offer a special thank you to Marc Hope for his expertise and in leading a new commercial group. This volunteer team has developed and is implementing a new commercial plan to raise the profile of squash in Scotland and find potential new sponsors.

This year we will lose Alan Marshall, as Alan steps down from the Board following a nine year term. Alan has led the sport with integrity and focus and given his time generously. Alan, I don't know what we will do without you. Thank you for everything that you have done for Scottish Squash and for your personal support over the past seven years.

This was an important year for squash in Scotland, as we sought to achieve a medal at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games. Huge congratulations to Paul Bell and the team of support staff, the six commonwealth athletes, Greg, Rory, Lisa, Georgia, Alan and Douglas for representing Scotland at the Games in Birmingham. Special recognition must go to Greg and Rory for bringing home the bronze medal.

We also positioned the organisation to move on to a new strategic cycle. A cycle in which we want to work together as a sport across Scotland, to drive continued growth and success in the game.

I am grateful for the continued support of **sportscotland**, who continue to lead, listen and support to help us to achieve our goals.

Once again, I would like to personally thank Sandy Adam, the team at Springfield Properties, and the Adam Family Foundation, as their incredible support continues, even during challenging times.

In the Commonwealth Year and beyond, Jon Doig and the team at Team Scotland, continue to provide brilliant support and leadership.

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. I highlight the work of the referees under the leadership of Jim Hay and thank Jim for all that he continues to do for the sport. A special mention for John Crawford, Mike Halpin, Maureen Maitland, Allan Law, who as referees give countless hours to enhance the quality of tournaments across Scotland. I also highlight the work of Keith Gristwood and Jason Broadberry, through RASTA, delivering a fun and engaging calendar of Racketball tournaments across the Nation.

A final highlight for me this year was the creativity and endeavour of the parents and players as they fund raised their way to the World Championships in Australia. As budgets continue to be extremely tight, following the global pandemic, there is much to be learned in how the juniors tackled the problem head on. Many thanks to all of the parents and supporters who made this happen for these talented young players. (cont.)



Chief Executive's Report (cont.)

This next strategic cycle is going to be tough again as we consistently push ourselves to improve and develop our sport and achieve our goals. We aim to:

- grow as a sport for women and girls, as players and leaders within the sport;
- welcome more young people, giving them fantastic squash experiences and helping them to thrive within and through the sport;
- help the elite squash players to continue to succeed on the world stage, in partnership with WSF and PSA, with more athletes progressing in the highest echelons of the game; and
- continue to be regarded as one of the best organised Scottish Governing Bodies.

For the Scottish Squash staff, this has been yet another tricky year for all, but with the support and guidance of our leadership team Garry, Allan and Paul, we have always risen to the challenge to consistently deliver with quality.

Thank you all and I look forward to another amazing year.

Maggie Still,
Scottish Squash Chief Executive