

Report of Irish Squash Board Meeting

Date: 20th February 2011

Venue: Sport HQ, Parkwest

Chairperson: Michael J. Hynes, Chairman

Attendees: John O'Connor, President
Eddie Murphy, Coaching Sec
Tariq Zaki, Leinster Rep
Rory Gillen, Hon. Treasurer
Cathy Quinn – Operations Manager

Lee Healy, Junior Sec
Brian Mahon, Masters Secretary
Ed Dunne, Senior Convener
Dermot McNamara, Muster Rep
Emma Toolan, Hon Secretary

In attendance: Kieran Doherty (deputising for Frank Marks Ulster Squash)..

Apologies: Brian Williams, Gerry Connaughton, Frank Marks

1) **Approval of Minutes** (9th January 2011)

Proposed: John O'Connor

Seconded: Ed Dunne

2) **Matters Arising**

The next Board Meeting will deal solely with the implementation of the Irish Squash Federation Strategic Plan 2010-2013. All Board members must submit new ideas to the office by Sunday 6th March which they feel will help drive the development of Irish Squash. **[Action: All]**

Rory suggested that the Development Plan for Irish Squash should be a key point on the Boards agenda at every meeting. Emma will add this to the agenda for future meetings. **[Action: ET]**

3) **Correspondence**

None

4) **Presidents Corner**

Junior Nationals

John took this opportunity to thank Eddie Murphy and Lee Healy and Michael Hynes for attending the Junior Nationals in Galway last weekend. It was very impressive to see so many Board Members attending the event.

Irish Sports Council Grant 2011

The Irish Sports Council Grant 2011 for Irish Squash has been cut by 10% resulting in a total downfall of 24,000. This cut was slightly higher than other NGB's. Why is this? Geraldine Fahy completed a comprehensive report on Irish Squash resulting in the following issues.

- ISC are unhappy with the performance of the Board at the Board Training Day held in October.
- The main concern ISC have is that we spend too much of the grant on high performance. The grant is specifically for funding the development of squash at grass roots level. Prize money for senior competitions is currently being funded from the grant. Money should be going to coaching/development, not competition.
- Why are we not using the SAGE accounting package?

Questions from the Board:

- Can we get a definition of 'High Performance' from Irish Sports Council?
- Is the Sports Council looking at 2010 figures or our projected spend for 2011?
- Can we have an informal conversation/meeting with the Sports Council with a view to getting advice on 'What do we should do?'
- Was the Board training an educational session as we were led to believe or was it an assessment of our knowledge?
- Why was Irish Squash Grant cut at a higher rate than other NGB's

Cathy will contact the Sports Council requesting answers to the above to be discussed in the next meeting. [Action: CQ]

Cathy has not been trained to use SAGE. Cathy currently uses Excel templates as the accountant prefers this format. Rory Gillen will discuss this issue with Marie Ahern. [Action; RG]

The office was informed that a letter regarding the above report is currently in the post. Michael will contact Geraldine on Monday 21st February to ensure the report is on its way to us.

This report is urgent. Once received, any areas that appear unclear, clarification is essential for review of the Development Plan at the next Meeting of the Board.

[Action JOC, MH, CQ]

5) Grant Budget 2011

Affiliation Fees (ESF, WSF, FIS) Provincial Rebates

Proposed reduction to 30% from 40%: Affiliation income has increased but in turn, we do not have to increase the provincial rebate. It was agreed that the rebate to the provinces would be maintained at last year's level i.e. the same amount of money would be rebated.

High performance

A plan is needed for high performance. Ed will compile this as soon as the definition of 'high performance' is given from the Sports Council. Ed will work with Hadrian and set out a 12 month plan for the Senior Men.

National Competitions:

- Irish Senior Open: The proposed spend for this tournament for 2011 is 10k vs. a total spend of 16,574 in 2010. We cannot afford to cut this budget by 6k.

We need a flagship tournament! This 16k is solely for prize money. In order to comply with WISPA competition policies, this funding is needed to match the minimum prize fund required. This competition can be highlighted as part of our grass roots development. In order to ensure that this event helps develop squash in Ireland, we must ensure that as many juniors as possible attend this competition.

- Leinster Senior Open: 2010 budget of 4k was granted but an expenditure of 5k is recorded. Why? Cathy to investigate spend for Leinster Senior Open 2010 [Action: CQ]

International Competition:

Senior European Championships (Men's & Women's):

The budget for year 2010 was €12,000 vs. the actual spend of €19,935. The budget for 2011 is €14,400. For this year's European Championships, each participating country had to pay a contribution levy to the host nation. Cathy will investigate if this figure was included in €14,400. [Action: CQ]

Sponsorship:

We need to record the sponsorship we receive for tournaments. It will be beneficial to Irish Squash if sponsorship money is recorded in our accounts. We should take sponsorship money into Irish Squash as 'income'. The funding allocated to competitions will then be combined with the sponsorship money and a total figure be sent out to the Tournament Director.

All sponsorship money should be directed straight to Irish Squash. Failure to do so may result in an impact on the grant. It is important to ensure that increased sponsorship does not result in a reduction in our ISC Annual Grant. Cathy will draft letter to issue to provinces. [Action: CQ]

Board Expenses:

- Disclosure of expenses for the Board expenses should be submitted and recorded. Clarification needed on this. Cathy will make contact with the auditor to clarify. [Action: CQ]
- There will be no increase/reduction in the current 30c per km petrol allowance

6) Board Reports

Operations Manager Report (Cathy Quinn)

Phoenix Update:

- Mount Temple School continue to ignore Irish Squash requests for a meeting, despite letter, email and Recommendation made from Lee Healy advising that the best time to make contact with the Principal of Mount Temple is the second week in June.
- Do we have any contact with the department of Education. Maybe we need a different route in addressing Phoenix Squash Club? Ed Dunne feels that we should look into working with local TD's. The sub committee should address this proposed route once the current election time passes. [Action; RG, ED, JOC]

School Squash Update:

- Schools squash need to be brought under the Irish Squash Banner. We need to distinguish all types of organisations/schools that are currently involved in squash. Those that play squash but not league should still be registered even if they don't pay affiliation fees. This process is to be formulated by Cathy and Lee and discussed at the next meeting in April. [Action: CQ, LH]
- Eoin Ryan is currently running a schools league for girls and boys. Tariq will present details of this league and how it is run at the next meeting. [Action TZ]

Promotion of Squash

- Posters/Media: media/promotion campaign needed i.e. membership benefits poster, posters for skills, etc. Cathy will look into the costs of driving this and present at the next meeting. [Action: CQ]
- Affiliation Database: We only have 400 correct emails out of 1259. Work in progress.
- eZine: We need to start eZine with the information we have. There is no need to wait until the end of the month. [Action: CQ]
- Community Games: Cathy to meet NDO for Community Games regarding the introduction of Squash. An update will be given at the next meeting. [Action: CQ]

Coaching Report (Eddie Murphy)

- The Level 2 Coaching Course approval is experiencing further delays. Eddie took this opportunity to ask all the Board for help in resolving this issue as there is no progress in the route that is currently being taken. Irish Squash office will make contact to UKCC. If unsuccessful, Cathy will then contact Coaching Ireland to explain our situation and make contact from that angle. Eddie will try to make direct contact with Nick Ryder. This is a major issue with the sports council and needs to be treated in a matter of urgency [Action: EM, CQ]
- Coaching Seminar, Saturday 19th February 2011: Eddie was not impressed with the attendance rate. Rory will ask Martin McDonnell, Fitzwilliam LTC, why the email that Cathy sent to the club address was not forwarded to its members.
Eddie would like to thank the office and the Board for their help in running a successful seminar. Eddie also took this opportunity to thank Fitzwilliam LTC for hosting the event and for their outstanding hospitality.

Provincial Reports

- Connaught squash was extremely grateful for the presence of Lee Healy and Eddie Murphy at the Irish Junior Nationals in Galway on 11th to 13th February.
- Leinster: No issues
- Munster: No issues.
- Ulster: No issues.

Junior Update

- Some parents of the U-19 players expressed their dissatisfaction verbally regarding the Irish Junior National rankings. An English player entered the Boys U19 section of the tournament and was ranked 6th by Lee Healy. Lee is happy with the process used to rank this player after doing extensive background work on this player. Lee followed unwritten guidelines and the custom and practice of protecting the 1st and 2nd seeds. This protection could not be extended to the 3rd seeded player. Board members involved in running tournaments agreed that the correct decision has been made. Eddie Murphy will clarify this to the Under 19 squad at the next squad training session.
[Action: Eddie]
- Lee took this opportunity to apologise for the error previously made with the incorrect ranking of Aisling Gerzoni.
- Refereeing: During the final of the U19 Irish Nationals, a conduct warning was issued to Conor Lavin. Lee followed the WSF Guidelines and stands by his decision in awarding this conduct stroke. Lee will issue this guideline on the home page of the Irish Squash website.

Masters Report

- Cathy to make contact with Leinster Veterans Squash in order to confirm tournament dates and venue. Once details are received, these will be published on the web. [Action: CQ]
- Cathy must also request tournament entry details from P.M. and in turn, email them to Brian Mahon. [Action: CQ]
- The confirmed venue for the Irish Open for Over 35s and 40s will take place in Mount Pleasant LTC and Old Belvedere. Cathy will publish this update on the web. [Action: CQ]

7) Senior Men's Update

- Medical Certificates: We are experiencing problems regarding the issuing of medical certificates which we know to be spurious. For example, a player withdrew from one of our compulsory tournaments prior to Christmas. He had communicated to the tournament director that he had to attend a meeting and would not be able to play in the remainder of the competition. We then received a medical cert which would excuse him from playing. Ed Dunne will contact the sports council/medical council and investigate if there is a recommended approach that may help resolve this issue. [Action ED]
- Tour Events: There have been a number of issues regarding the consistency of the running of tournaments. A check list is required to standardise the smooth running of tournaments. This list must cover entry fees, prize funds, play offs, funding, etc. [Action ED]
- Squads: Junior players are beating senior players. Ed feels that it would be very beneficial to the development of these players if they attend senior squads.

Actions taken:

1. Vote taken to determine if Juniors should be able to train with senior players at home (Full board approval granted)

2. Vote taken to determine if juniors should be able to train with senior players abroad (6 voted for, 5 no vote and 1 vote opposed)
3. A sub committee consisting of Lee Healy, Eddie Murphy, Hadrian and Paul Bell was formed in order to select those juniors who qualify to participate in senior squads. [Action: LH, EM, ED, PB, H]

7) AOB

John O'Connor would like to take this opportunity to thank Joan Gorham for her efforts and time committed to the Senior Women's Team. Joan has had to step down from this position due to family and personal commitments.

Lee, Cathy, and Michael met with Leinster representatives David Corbett and Tariq Zaqi to discuss underlying problems and draw a line under past issues. Both sides seek to continuously improve the relationship between Leinster Squash and Irish Squash.

Frank Donnelly raised a query on Saturday 18th with Emma Toolan regarding the voting situation of Total Fitness. Total Fitness has three sites; Castleknock, Malahide Road and Sandyford. Each site has its own committee and league team. As a result, Total Fitness is entitled to three separate representative votes and like all other clubs, each affiliated member will also have a vote. Cathy will publish a notice on the web home page to outline voting entitlements for the EGM. [Action: CQ]

The next meeting is due to take place Sunday 27th March, the same weekend as the Junior Interprovincial's. Cathy will email the Board Monday 21st with alternate dates.

The Office

CQ departed the meeting at this point.

A detailed discussion took place relating to Office Issues. A vote confirming confidence in the Office was carried. It was agreed to seek legal advice on the status of the current contract of the Operations Manager.

Meeting concluded at 17.25 hrs.

Next meeting date TBC.