



Since taking on the role as Regional Development officer for Squash in Leinster one of my objectives was to organise and run a “Mini Squash Camp”. The camp would cater for beginner and improver players with the emphasis being on having a relaxed fun week playing squash.

The date was set for 18<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> July and the venue as Old Belvedere Squash Club. The event was publicised interactively on the Irish Squash website and on several Facebook pages. Flyers were also handed into schools and several squash clubs.

After advertising the event I was unsure how many children I would be able to attract as there is so much competition out there for summer camps. Would I get enough kids interested in 4 hours of Mini Squash for 5 days? As it worked out a few of the children that I coach during the year signed up along with their cousins, friends and neighbours. All in all 16 children participated in the camp. Ages ranging from 6 to 15 years with very mixed abilities. Half the children who participated in the camp had never heard of squash, had never ever been on a squash court, and only 5 were members of a squash club. So some interesting dynamics but exactly the type of children this camp was in place to cater for and capture.

From the get go all the children were up for having fun and enjoying the week. I was really impressed with their enthusiasm to learn new skills and participate in all activities. As the week progressed I could feel the interest in playing squash increase so that by the end of each day I could hardly get some of the children to go home. There was a great “buzz” about the place which was great to see.

Each day began with warm-up followed by technique and drills, a team game and finishing up with squash games. On the Tuesday Brian McNally from Old Belvedere Squash Club gave a session on refereeing which the children found really interesting. All were able to mark and referee matches by the end of the week. Wednesday was team challenge day, Thursday handicaps and the week culminated in a camp Championships. Irish Squash operations manager Cathy Quinn presented all camp participants with their Irish Squash membership and Championship prizes.

Quotes from the kids:

“Mum, I knew I’d like squash but not this much”

“When is the next one?”

“This was the best camp ever, EVER”

As a result of the camp –

Two juniors and one adult are joining Old Belvedere and I have had enquiries from other parents about membership and information about clubs. Junior memberships were sponsored by Old Belvedere and myself.



Four children received rackets, two of which had no racket to play with. Unsquashable rackets were purchased at a discounted price from Frank Donnelly along with a racket kindly donated by Derek Ryan.

Two children bought new rackets themselves during the week.

All camp members became members of Irish Squash.

I think this summer camp is a good example why it is really important for clubs that have no junior members to support coaches in running camps. Ultimately it will benefit their club. So a big thanks to Irish Squash and Old Belvedere for their support and encouragement without which this camp could not have taken place.