



**16<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of Irish Squash Federation clg.**

**Report of the Board for 2020/2021**



Derek Ryan



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

IRISH SQUASH PRESENTS SQUASH & FITNESS

**Squash Webinar Series: A Conversation with *Nouze Camille-Soume***

Wednesday 17 February 7.30 - 8.30pm

The World No.3 and French No.1 has been on the PSA World Tour since 2008 picking up 13 PSA wins including British Open and Tournament of Champions titles. Tune in to hear about her life on the tour and her quest to become World Champion and retain the elusive No.1 spot.

Join Ireland's very own Aisling Blake as she puts her questions and poses to the World No.3, a former World No.2 and 6x6 Champion. She will be asked to pose to the intriguing and entertaining evening!

More info and FREE TICKETS at [www.squashfitness.ie](http://www.squashfitness.ie)





## Index

<b>Item</b>	<b>Page</b>
<i>Presidents Report</i>	2
<i>Honorary Treasurers Report</i>	2
<i>Honorary Secretary/Membership Report</i>	3
<i>Covid Report</i>	4
<i>Child Protection Officers Report</i>	5
<i>Anti-Doping Report</i>	6
<i>Junior Secretary Report</i>	7
<i>Senior Secretary Report</i>	7
<i>Masters Secretary Report</i>	8
<i>Coaching Secretary Report</i>	9
<i>Refereeing Secretary Report</i>	11
<i>Connacht Report</i>	12
<i>Leinster Report</i>	13
<i>Munster Report</i>	15
<i>Ulster Report</i>	15
<i>Chief Operations Officer Report</i>	16
<i>Strategic Plan Report</i>	20
<i>Governance Report</i>	20
<i>Women in Sport Report</i>	21
<i>Single Platform Report</i>	21

## President's Report for 2020 - 2021

The Covid-19 pandemic has dominated our lives since early 2020 in ways we could never have imagined. Our sport squash, alongside other indoor sports, faced the toughest restrictions within the sporting sector. Our clubs remained closed for most of the time with only short periods of restricted play possible in late 2020. The board of Irish Squash focussed on working to protect our sport and enabling a safe return to play for our members.

With Sport Ireland's support, we refunded affiliation fees to clubs for the 2019/2020 season and waived the fees for 2020/2021. Provinces and clubs were invited to apply for grant support to assist in dealing with losses due to the pandemic.

Board meetings were held via Google Meet throughout the year. We focussed on off-court priorities, including governance and policy reviews, the introduction of a single platform to improve our operations and service to members, strategic planning with a view to enabling a strong re-emergence of squash post-Covid.

An EGM in September introduced changes to term limits for board directors and that at least 30% of each gender should be represented on the board. I would like to thank Eddie Murphy who now stands down having served the board as both Munster Representative and Coaching Secretary for many years. His commitment and passion for squash have been evident throughout these years of dedicated service.

As we gradually return to club activities and competitions, we find ourselves in a healthy financial position. The new strategic plan will be launched in late 2021 and will set out how we shall invest in and drive the growth of our sport over the next 5 years.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow board members and our COO, Paul Nugent, for their hard work, good humour, and strong collaborative approach throughout this most challenging of times.

**Rosie Barry**  
**President Irish Squash**

## Honorary Treasurer Report for 2020 - 2021

The attached financials, approved by the Board cover the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020.

### **Income**

Slight decrease of almost 2% in overall income.

Sport Ireland core funding increased slightly to €200k with Women-in-Sport funding remaining at €10k.

Additional Sport Ireland Covid support funding of €38k was received in November 2020 and a further €104k in Dec 20.

The €10k International Competitions income was made up of refunds from WSF and ESF for previously paid entries for cancelled team events.

### **Expenditure**

18% lower spend as a result of cancelled events. Notable items as follows:

Salary spend reduced due to Government Covid support payments.

Development spend is distribution of Covid support funding and the balance of the R Gillen sponsorship monies.

Affiliation fees refunded to all clubs.

Grants paid of €66k relates to accruals for the unspent portion (as at Dec 20) of the additional Sport Ireland Covid support funding. Specifically, €38k for Club support and €28k for Provincial support.

### **Balance Sheet**

Cash at bank has increased by €214k due to the increased Covid support funding and the surplus generated in the year through reduced spend. €139k of this is to be spent in 2021 and is held in Creditors as Accruals (balance of Affiliation fees refund, Women in Sport, Provincial Covid fund, Club Covid fund, balance of R Gillen sponsorship).

Total Reserves held of €190k at 31 December 2020 represent a healthy position and the recent work on Strategy will deliver a comprehensive plan for the best use of these funds.

### **January to September 2021**

Sport Ireland Core Funding remains same at €200k for the year with 75% received in March 2021. Women in sport funding of €15k received in June 21 with 50% paid out in August 21 to approved projects.

A further €15k from Sport Ireland was also received in June 21 for Special Projects incl. SportyHQ.

Expenditure is in line with expectations with additional spend committed to support the PSA Hub from May to October 2021.

**Mark McGugan**  
**Honorary Treasurer**

### **Honorary Secretary/Membership Report for 2020 - 2021**

The board of Irish Squash for the 2020/21 comprised:

President	Rosie Barry
Honorary Secretary	Anne Costello - Acting
Honorary Treasurer	Mark McGugan
Junior Administrator	Christine Lowry
Refereeing Secretary	Lee Healy
Coaching Secretary	Eddie Murphy
Masters Secretary	Gerry Callanan
Senior Secretary	Conor O'Hare
Membership Secretary	Anne Costello
Child Protection Officer	Ann Sheppard
Connacht Representative	Gerry Galvin

Leinster Representative     Peter O'Halloran  
Munster Representative     Eugene Walker  
Ulster Representative        Mark Gilliland

Between the 15<sup>th</sup> AGM and now the board have had 16 meetings. Meetings were held generally via zoom or google meet, with 2 in person meetings held in Dublin.

Various issues have been addressed over the year including the following: -

- COVID19 – Irish Squash response to the evolving situation
- Governance – Bylaws/policies updated, board handbook updated, new strategic plan, risk register updated, board training and review
- Liaison with Sport Ireland, Coaching Ireland, Federation of Irish Sport, WSF, ESF
- Child protection – reviewed and updated
- Introduction of single platform/SportyHQ
- Google drive introduced
- EGM held with two changes to the M&A passed
- Introduction of the PSA training hub and financial support for PSA players
- Several webinars were held with interviews with top world players
- Training and strength and conditioning sessions were run for players via zoom
- Refereeing – WSF has introduced a new system for qualifying referees
- Planning for the 2021/2022 season

Membership Secretary Report - Affiliation fee structure has been reviewed. Affiliation fees were not charged in the 2020/21 season.

On behalf of the Irish Squash membership, the Board of Irish Squash would like to thank Paul Nugent, COO Irish Squash for all his help and diligent work throughout the season.

**Anne Costello**  
**Acting Hon. Secretary**  
**Membership Secretary**

### **Covid Report for 2020 - 2021**

A Covid Working Group was established in April 2020 in response to the ever-changing demands of the pandemic on our sport. Each time new public health restrictions were published, there was a lag time whilst the Sport Ireland Expert Group interpreted the guidelines globally for all sports. The role of our committee was to then interpret these guidelines in the context of squash. Whenever further clarification was needed, we submitted our proposals for approval by the Expert Group, who generally met every Thursday morning. Irish Squash were then in a position to be able to communicate approved Covid Updates to our members using our website and email messaging. We dealt directly with clubs and their Covid Officers regarding any queries as they arose. Our working group met as often as was required throughout the pandemic.

As leader of the working group, I attended numerous online meetings hosted by the Federation of Irish Sport for indoor sport NGBs. As a broader group we were supported by the Federation in raising awareness amongst politicians of the extra burden placed on indoor sports by the pandemic. I also attended two meetings on behalf of Irish Squash with Minister of State for Sport, Jack Chambers, which were hosted by the Federation for indoor sport NGBs.

As an ESF board member, I was directly involved in the decision-making around postponing and subsequently cancelling ESF Championship and circuit events for juniors and masters since March 2020. ESF surveyed member nations on a regular basis to monitor the effects of the pandemic on squash throughout Europe: there was significant variation between countries in how restrictions were applied. Squash in Ireland faced tougher and more prolonged restrictions than many of our fellow European nations.

Domestically, as a special project, Irish Squash submitted a 'Pilot Trial Elite Player Training Hub' proposal to Sport Ireland in April 2021. The aim of this project was to provide access to on court training for our elite players who did not qualify as 'High Performance/Elite Player' status under Sport Ireland and Government regulations.

Personnel involved were Eoin Ryan (Coach), Rosie Barry (Medical Director), Srdjan Kistic (onsite operations manager) and Paul Nugent (offsite operations manager). A tightly controlled group of 8 players who had to be registered with the PSA, trained in 2 separate pods of 4, several times each week in Sutton.

First sessions of the PSA training Hub started in late April. All players required negative PCR swabs prior to joining the training pods, clearance of daily online health questionnaires and negative Rapid Antigen testing on every day of training. Sport Ireland extended the 3-week pilot phase of the Hub following a report which confirmed the Covid safety of the protocol and the effectiveness of the sessions for the players.

Shane Califf, Director of Governing Bodies in Sport Ireland, has worked closely with us throughout the past year and we are grateful for his continued support.

I would like to thank the members of the Covid Working Group for their readiness and commitment to our important work during the pandemic: Gerry Galvin, Peter O'Halloran, Mark Gilliland, Paul Nugent and Shane Broadberry.

**Rosie Barry**  
**President Irish Squash**

## Child Protection Officer Report for 2020 - 2021

### **Child protection compliance in clubs.**

September 2020 a letter was sent to all clubs re how to comply with Children's First Act and Sport Ireland's and Sport Northern Ireland's Safeguarding Standards. This was accompanied with a Safeguarding checklist.

This was a follow up letter from June.

### **Self-Assessment Framework:**

AS attended webinar on new Club Safeguarding Self-Assessment Framework in March. The NGBs of all sports are required to request all clubs to fill in their individual safeguarding self-assessment. This is mandatory and must be completed by March 2022. Each NGB must inform Sport Ireland of their time frame for roll out and completion. Irish Squash's timeframe is 27<sup>th</sup> September – 4<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

### **Emphasis on ensuring Irish Squash is adhering to best practice by:**

- Ensuring all coaches on web site are vetted and have completed Safeguarding 1
- Coaching secretary will not issue coaching qualification without evidence of both vetting and Safeguarding 1



- Clarification of titles returned to Sport Ireland Oct 2020:
  - NCO Ann Sheppard
  - DLP Rosie Barry
  - Mandated person Paul Nugent
  - Liaison Person Gerry Connaughton
- Ann Sheppard completed Safeguarding 2 and 3
- Rosie Barry completed Safeguarding 1 and 3
- Plan to organise Safeguarding 1 course for all Board members

#### **Challenges – present and future**

- Communication with third level squash clubs
- Direct communication with squash clubs in Ulster
- Ensuring tournament directors and tournament referees for all junior tournaments run by Irish Squash are both vetted and have completed Safeguarding 1.

**Ann Sheppard**  
**Child Protection Officer**

### **Anti-Doping Report for 2020 - 2021**

#### **Introduction**

As we had no competition over the last year, no anti-doping tests were carried out at tournaments. As we get back to tournaments over the coming months, the Sport Ireland Anti –Doping information wallet will be distributed.

We noted the update to the WADA anti-doping rules for 2021.

#### **WSF**

The WSF organised 2 education webinars in October on

- Principles of Clean Sport
- Out of Competition Testing

Our top players were written to and encouraged to attend the webinars.

Consideration should be given this season to the production of a questionnaire related to anti-doping, that players at different levels could be asked to complete at certain selected tournaments. This would help to ascertain the level of knowledge and plan for further anti-doping education as required.

**Aidan O’Colmain**  
**Anti-Doping Officer**

## Junior Secretary Report for 2020 - 2021

### Committee:

- Christine Lowry – Junior Secretary
- Ulster Rep – Mark Gilliland
- Connacht Rep – David Noone
- Leinster Rep: Andrew Gillespie
- Munster Rep: Brendan Connolly

### Summary:

Due to covid, no tournaments were held for representative teams selected.

The following is a brief summary of the activities for the year:

- Calendar was drafted for the 2020/21 season but was not finalized/approved due to covid-19 restrictions.
- Update to the Junior Selection Guidelines were drafted but not finalized/approved due to covid-19 restrictions.
- Online “European Junior Championships” organised by Derek Ryan and funded by Irish Squash – was held on 16-18th of April.
- Online Strength and Conditioning classes were run by Derek Ryan over 12 weeks for U13s/U15s and U17s/U19s from April 2021.

### Season 2021/2022

The calendar is currently being drafted and selection criteria are being reviewed ahead of the coming season. Both should be posted shortly.

Junior Committee for the coming season to be confirmed post AGM.

**Christine Lowry**  
**Junior Secretary**

## Senior Secretary Report for 2020 - 2021

### Summary

This season has unfortunately been heavily impacted by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in no Senior Tour events for the 2020/21 season.

On a more positive note, there has been some return to competition in recent months via a series of three closed satellite events held between Belfast and Dublin, providing our senior players the opportunity to return to competitive play. The quality of squash on show was a testament to those players involved and their dedication to training throughout unprecedented disruption over the past 12 months.

### Season 2021/2022

The upcoming season should see the return of the usual tour events, culminating in the European Team Championships in April for those players that have qualified to represent Ireland. The ‘A’ Internationals have proved popular in past seasons and a return of this event would be a welcome addition to the calendar, giving our talented younger players valuable experience as they look to transition towards a place on the senior team.

Participation in Senior Tour events by players of all standards is key to the successful return of competition in Ireland in the coming season and I hope to see as many old and new faces as possible.



I would like to wish fellow members of the board and all players every success in the coming season.

**Conor O'Hare**  
**Senior Secretary**

## **Masters Secretary Report for 2020 - 2021**

### **Committee**

Masters Sec Gerry Callanan  
Leinster Rep Karam Singh  
Connacht Rep Dave Lalor  
Munster Rep John Dineen  
Ulster Rep Lynda Dunlop  
35/40 Rep Kevin Knox

### **Irish Masters Tour News**

The tour was all cancelled this year due to covid.

### **Ranking News**

Rankings were frozen due to covid.

### **Home International News**

The Home International Steering Committee have cancelled the events for 2021 due to covid.

### **ESF Tournament News**

The Irish Open Masters in October has been cancelled due to covid. This was the second time this has happened as of yet we are not sure if we will tender for 2022 a lot will depend on committee enthusiasm and finances

### **Start 2021 season**

Our first tournament back is scheduled Dublin 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021

### **Training during Covid**

The masters organized online quiz nights and online training during covid to keep players engaged. Derek Ryan went above and beyond to make these a great success.

We started off with a quiz night in February with just 30 teams involved Damien O Reilly's team won the first prize of two rackets.

In February we started weekly online classes in 6 weekly batches (3 series finished in June) with a view to getting back to squash last June. We had over 230 in total sign up for the classes and the average attendance nightly was 70 masters' players which was an extraordinary response and really I felt was a lot to do with Derek's delivery,

The masters received a small grant from sport Ireland which paid for most of this.

**Gerry Callanan**  
**Masters Secretary**

## Coaching Secretary Report for 2020 - 2021

At the start of the year /season we had a lot of uncertainty around Coaching and what we could achieve.

Some squads we held on zoom with various Junior coaches during the lockdown, we organised strength and conditioning classes with Derek Ryan for Juniors and Masters

These were very good for our players and turned out to be great fun for everyone.

### Coach appointments

The Junior coaches appointed last year were reappointed this year due to covid 19 as agreed by the Board.

Interaction with squads were mainly by zoom by the coaches.

### Webinars 2021

Irish squash felt our members needed something during this difficult time.

Derek Ryan and myself got together and came up with a plan to produce interesting Webinars with top class participants, Ali Farag was always my target in the back of my head and after a few conversations Derek came around to the same target!

Derek suggested we ask Aisling Blake to host and interview the Coaches and players, Aisling was fantastic to have in this role and I want to thank her on behalf of Irish squash for doing a great job.

### ***Webinar series 1 - a mixture of world class coaches and players consisting of***

- David Evan's former World no 4 and Performance director Squash Wales
- Haitham Effat Former Egyptian National Team Coach
- Ali Farag World No 1
- Camille Serme World No 3 lady Squash player, Camille replaced Nouran Gohar the World No 2 who could not attend the webinar at the last minute.
- Mostafa Asal World no 12 at that time.
- Mazen Hesham World No 14 at that time.

### ***Webinar series 2***

- Laura Massaro World champion and World No 1
- Ramy Ashour World champion and World No 1
- Derek Ryan former World No.6 PSA Lead Physio and S&C consultant
- Niamh Fitzpatrick Clinical Psychologist Sports performance (Niamh will complete this on Dec 1st, 2021 @7.30 pm)

### ***Webinar series 3***

Jennifer Dillon and Aisling Blake have organised series 3 focused on Ladies squash, dates to be announced soon.

- Mike Way - Head Coach Harvard University. Former coach to Jonathan Power (former world no. 1) and currently Mentor to Ali Farag current world no. 1.
- Shonagh Spratt Murphy. PSA Physiotherapist.
- Aisling Snedker Sports Nutritionist.
- US College Recruitment Process with US College Coach detailing the recruitment criteria Stateside and their role as Head High School Coach. Panel- Breanne Flynn, Hannah Craig and Fiona Power who have been through the process/system sharing their stories and experiences.

A big thank you to Jennifer and Aisling for their work, and I look forward to some high-quality conversations!

### **Coaching Ireland**

I have been working with Vicky Guy from Coaching Ireland on getting our Level 1 Syllabus up onto the Coaching Ireland framework. This has been ongoing throughout the year, with a zoom call every Thursday work permitting for me! This has been a long struggle for me, but I see light at the end of the tunnel, all the documentation required has been created and it was a lot. As I write this, I hope to have that last document completed by the time of the AGM 2021. Then we will need to do a pilot Level 1 course and get it agreed with the Coaching Ireland review panel. Hopefully, this will put Irish squash on a better footing with the Sports Council regarding our funding as this is a large part of our grant application. Once Level 1 is complete, we will do the same for the Leaders course and Level 2.

### **Coaching Courses**

#### ***WSF Level 2***

The 1st weekend of a WSF Level 2 coaching course was held in Sports link Dublin, with weekend 2 to complete on 16th & 17th Oct

#### ***WSF Level 1***

Level 1 courses are planned for Thurles and Dublin and will be announced soon.

#### ***WSF online Foundation Level coaching course***

Our Tutor committee met to discuss this and after reviewing the course, it was decided at that time the course was not fit for purpose for Irish Squash. Since then, there have been a few Irish squash members who completed the course. Michael Khan has now advertised an eLearning Level 1 course consisting of an eLearning and onsite course, candidates MUST have completed the online foundation course to qualify for this course. This course is scheduled for 15th -17th Oct in Vienna (if it goes ahead numbers permitting). I will speak to Michael after that to get an idea on how it is presented.

### **Coaching committee meeting**

This was held back in April; the committee discussed ideas for a new coaching structure, and they will be reviewed in light of the available budget and the new strategic plan.

To finish up I would like to say a big thanks to all the people I worked with during the past 2 seasons as Coaching Secretary, your help was much appreciated.

Working with Derek Ryan on the Webinars was a pleasure and hopefully we will see more in the future.

When I first sat on the Board 24 years ago, it was never my intention to be here so long, but when you have a passion, you end up where I am today. Squash has been very good to me and giving my time I hope, it has been for the better!

Cheers

**Eddie Murphy**  
**Coaching Secretary**

### Refereeing Secretary Report for 2020 - 2021

Season 20-21 has been one of little or no action on the courts but lots of activity off the court. The Highlight of the year has to be the launch of the long-awaited World Squash Officiating website, [www.worldsquashofficiating.com](http://www.worldsquashofficiating.com). This portal will become the 'go-to' place for players who want to better understand the Rules of the Game, for players who want to progress to refereeing and for those referees who want to advance their qualification level.

I was delighted to be able to help resolve issues by bringing various errors, omissions and bugs to the notice of the developers at the preliminary stage in the introduction of the website, but I must also admit that they were few in number! Roy Gingell of WSF /WSO, a well-known and very active PSA circuit referee gave up a considerable chunk of his time in recent years to the creation of this invaluable portal and Irish Squash acknowledges the great contribution made by him and his team in W.S.F. / W.S.O. to our sport.

To promote this important initiative Irish Squash organised a voucher system to cover the initial expense for any player advancing beyond Level 0 to Level 1 and that is still available to our members.

The following table illustrates the change in the referee qualifying system:

W.S.O. Level	Previous Irish Squash Level / WSF Levels	New Method of Qualification	Observation
0	Not applicable	Online assessment	How to play safely
1	Club Grade	Online assessment	Knowing the rules and using the appropriate calls in intra-club and inter-club settings.
2	Tournament Grade	On-line assessment combined with practical appraisals.	Applying the rules correctly to the standard necessary for tournaments.
3	National	On-line assessment combined with practical appraisals.	Similar to Level 2 but with an emphasis of the high-performance game.
4	European	Currently being developed.	This will be a further refinement in understanding for referees officiating at the highest levels of the sport.
5	World		

To address the shortage of active referees the focus for season 21-22 must be to further engage with players and with existing referees to increase numbers in each of the 4 Provinces and to also raise the level of qualification of existing referees.

The list of current Irish Squash referees can be found on our website at [www.irishsquash.com/referees/](http://www.irishsquash.com/referees/) maybe you or a playing partner would consider adding your name in the new season?

In conclusion I would like to thank Irish Squash President, Rosie Barry and her Board for their full support in the past season – a very trying one for all.

**Lee Healy**  
**Refereeing Secretary**

### Connacht Squash Report 2020 - 2021



Most clubs opened their doors last September to a season of certain uncertainty, members were sceptical of joining not knowing what was going to happen with indoor sports. We got approximately two months of squash in pods of 6, then the closure arrived as a result of covid lockdown. In this period Westport, Claremorris and GLTC made use of the down time to make improvements to their squash courts and facilities.

Through the NGB, Westport Squash club made an application for resilience funding from Sport Ireland for assistance to pay off a seven-year loan for the upgrading of their club facilities. They were awarded €28k. Thanks to the board of Irish Squash for their support with this application. Westport SC suffered floor damage due storm water flooding; a successful insurance claim was made for all courts to be refurbished plus the club in general.

GLTC made improvements to their changing facilities, new toilets and showers.

Claremorris SC completed the glass wall on their court last December.

From 20<sup>th</sup> September clubs are slowly getting back with vaccinated members playing,

Westport has held two registration evenings to sign up new and existing members with the SportyHQ platform, as a pilot club in Connacht we are using the access control, membership, and court booking facility on the system. We're hoping the other clubs will move over to SportyHQ very soon.

Looking forward to a normal year of squash activities ahead.

**Gerry Galvin**  
**Connacht Squash Representative**

## Leinster Squash Report 2020 - 2021



It comes as no surprise that the season was interrupted by the Covid epidemic and the Public Health guidelines, so no competitive season or events were held for the 2020/2021.

It has significantly impacted all clubs and players in the province. The full extent of the impact to our sport going into hibernation for months will present itself over the coming months as we return to “live with Covid”. As we get back on our feet we will be communicating and seeking feedback from all clubs in the Province to see how we can help.

While the competitive season was in hibernation Leinster Squash did not stop from contributing to significant initiatives that will help the Sport and our Province once we return to play.

These include the following;

- **Irish Squash Strategic Exercise** - We have actively contributed to this exercise at many levels. We have one member (Peter O’Halloran) on the Irish Squash Strategic sub-committee, while the other members of the committee contributed to the Survey. Gerry Delaney and Noel Storey attended the Leinster consultative sessions along with Aidan Dillon, Ciaran Roche, Kevin Quirke, Paul Conroy and Elvy DaCosta.
- **Single Platform** - The members of the Committee have been active Team Members of the Single Platform Project since June 2020. I have acted as the Project Lead, while Andrew Gillespie is investing a significant amount of his time consolidating historic to import into the system, in order to build a single player register, hold player results and establish a standard player rating that will have a significant impact on the game in the coming years.
- **On-line Banking Facilities** - Although it may sound mundane, the set-up of this with the bank required a surprising amount of time. Fortunately, our persistence has paid off and we now will be able to offer online payment processing for whatever we offer going forward.
- **Google Workspace & Website for Leinster Squash** - Another piece of housekeeping but no less time consuming. We will be moving to a new service in the coming weeks so we shall be utilizing these resources more fully to work more effectively and provide a new look integrated Web Site in the coming months.
- **Physical Gaming & Interactive Squash** - We have been in touch with a variety of clubs who might be interested in deploying this technology. If you are interested in adopting this, please get back in touch with us as we would like to work with you as a pilot, build our understanding of this proposition and measure its contribution to your facility and the engagement in squash over time. (See <https://interactivesquash.com/>)

And looking forward;

- **The AGM & Elections** - We shall be holding our next AGM (virtually) on the **28th of October at 7:30**. This is an opportunity for Leinster players and representatives from the Clubs to join the committee and contribute to the direction of Leinster Squash. It is also the time where we share thoughts of the year past, take stock of our financial position and set out what we

plan to do for the following season. We will also seek your feedback on all things Leinster Squash.

- **Leagues & Tournaments** - As we come out of Covid, we shall be introducing a non-ranking event to help our members get playing and safely getting back up to the pace of competitive Squash. We shall introduce the Leinster League in January, so keep an eye on further communications over the course of October & November. We shall also be implementing the Irish Squash Competitive Calendar when that becomes available.
- **Driving the new Irish Squash Strategic Plan** - In light of the launch of the new Irish Strategy we shall be setting out how we can deliver against this strategy to drive Programmes and Initiatives that will stimulate the playing of Squash in Clubs, Schools and Third Level institutions over the coming season. This will also include an examination of the role of Leinster Squash in the context of the new plan, and long-term vision for Irish Squash.
- **Non-Affiliated Clubs** - We have a total of 45 active squash facilities in Leinster. Many of those are not affiliated with Irish Squash. We will be exploring ways to assist those facilities to further develop their structures and engage in the broader Squash community by developing targeted Coaching & Development programmes to build participation in their local community.
- **Succession Planning** - We are looking for fresh voices to join us on the committee. In light of this we shall be reaching out to the community for people willing to contribute in any way they can to assist us deliver the events and programmes we need to drive the sport forward in Leinster.

In conclusion it has been a very strange year, but throughout the disruption we have taken the opportunity to continue to progress the Sport we love. This does not happen by chance, so I would like to thank my long-standing colleagues on the committee for their continued dedication and efforts.

They are;

***Gerry Delaney (Hon Treasurer), Noel Story (Hon Secretary), Alan Sheehy-Skeffington, Andrew Gillespie, Dara O'Flynn, Gavin Lestrangle, Penny Turner, Sylvia Doyle and League Administrator Mick Collins.***

If you wish to discuss any of the topics, join us on the committee or raise any further points not raised here by all means contact any member of the committee and we will be happy to follow up.

**Peter O'Halloran**  
**President of Leinster Squash**  
**Leinster Squash Representative**

## Munster Squash Report for 2020 - 2021



### Munster Squash Activity

Due to Government Guidelines for COVID-19 and the health and safety of all Munster Squash players, the Munster Committee had to withdraw our plans for all activity in the province, including and not limited to the following the following;

- Junior Squash
- Schools squash
- Women's Squash
- Senior Squash
- Tournaments
- Inter-provincials
- Refereeing

### Committee Meetings

We had the 2020 Agm on 29th of August @ 4pm.

Post AGM the Munster Squash committee met on a further 6 occasions.

### Funding

Munster Squash received funding amounting to €7,000 from Irish Squash.

Kind Regards

**Eugene Walker**

**Munster Squash Representative**

## Ulster Squash Report for 2020 - 2021



Unfortunately, there was no squash activity due to Covid-19. We are hopefully getting back to competitive squash, with the Ulster Senior Closed being held 1-2 October and other events planned prior to Christmas. League squash will hopefully resume from January 2022 if agreed by clubs.

### Covid-19

Continued engagement with Sport NI on restrictions. I would like to thank Irish Squash for their support and open communication during this period.



### Sporty HQ

New web-based software solution currently being introduced by Irish Squash which Ulster Squash hope to use for leagues and tournaments. Clubs can avail of Sporty HQ free of charge to manage court bookings, payments, managing ladders and box leagues, or running their own events.

### Squash Development plans

We have received funding from Sport NI to support activities in getting back to squash after Covid-19. The focus of this funding is on increasing participation and capacity within clubs. Specifically:

- 10-12 new Level 1 coaches (course costs free to participants). Clubs are invited to nominate potential coaches.
- Novice league for players who have not played competitive squash before.
- Women's squash introductory courses.
- Coaching and engagement with clubs outside the Greater Belfast area.

### Mark Gilliland

#### Ulster Squash Representative

## Chief Operations Officer Report for AGM 2021

### Introduction/Covid

We all had a very tough past year and a half, with very little play allowed and no competitions. In late summer/early autumn 2020, the government did allow some play in pods of 6 and some limited coaching. Regulations changed quite a bit over the past 15 months, with solo squash and household play allowed from late in 2020 until we had another lockdown early in the new year.

Limited play was allowed again from June 7<sup>th</sup> with solo, same household and one on one coaching. Finally, the announcement was made in early September that match play could resume between vaccinated players from September 20<sup>th</sup>. If all participants are not immune, then training in pods of 6 will be permitted. All restrictions in society end on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. It is hoped to have some tournaments in early November, after enough time for players to get match for post Sept 20<sup>th</sup> start date.

We plan to publish the 2020/21 calendar very shortly and look forward to a year full of squash and activity.

Below is a summary of activities and projects conducted over the last year.

### Grants

We applied for and was granted €200k for our core grant for 2021 in December 2020. The federation also applied for Covid grants in autumn 2020 and we were awarded €28k for a Covid Grant and €10k as a Special project grant for the Single Platform Project.

Then in December 2020 we applied for and was awarded supplementary Covid grants.

- €38k for lost affiliation fees – Affiliation fees were refunded for 2019/20 and not collected for 2020/21.
- €38k for club's fund – four clubs were awarded €9.3k. €28.7k in reserve for future applications.
- €28k for loss of income of provincial leagues – Connacht - €2k, Munster €7k, Leinster €16k, Masters €3k.
- Total - €104k
- In March we applied for a Special Projects grant for corporate governance, training and development, upgrading of IT infrastructure and online resources, the review / development of strategic plans and business area strategies.
- We were granted €15k

### **World Squash Day 2020**

- Planned for October 10<sup>th</sup> as an opportunity to ‘relaunch the game’ It was publicised on our social media clubs were encouraged to run limited events staggered over the full weekend (Oct 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>) to spread players out and maintain distancing with the aim to relaunch squash in their area.
- We proposed a ‘Reclaim our Courts’ Day, asking players to take a ‘selfie’ and what they did – solo/routines distanced/POD play.

### **Coaching Raffle**

- Coaches were invited to apply to be involved in a Raffle for 2 hours free coaching for junior players on December 17<sup>th</sup>.
- 14 coaches applied to participate. They were asked to submit players for the draw by Jan 4<sup>th</sup>.
- 195 junior players entered and the 10 winners were drawn and announced on Jan 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Winners from clubs were – Mt. Pleasant – 3, Celtic – 2 and Sutton – 5.

### **Governance/Bye Laws**

- Within the work on the Governance Code, Board training took place with Sarah O’Shea on April 12<sup>th</sup>. This is a requirement every year under the Governance Code and should take place in June or July each year, after a new board has been elected at the AGM.
- The byelaws subcommittee of Lee Healy (Chairperson), Anne Costello and Paul Nugent were meeting since the start of the year. The existing byelaws were reviewed and updated, where appropriate.
- Sarah O’Shea, a consultant employed to advise on work for adopting the Governance Code and Bye laws work, worked with the subcommittee over April - May in getting all the policies in place to be fully compliant with the governance code.
- All the work on the Governance code was completed with the strategic plan principles TBC and then we will be fully compliant with the Governance Code in time for the Sport Ireland deadline of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021.

### **Strategic Plan Review**

- Having had introductory meetings with 2 consultants, a decision was made to work with Sport 2 Sport, a company run by Derek McGrath and John Feehan.
- The subcommittee met Sport 2 Sport with a plan to engage with the squash community in the consultation phase.
- 8 focus groups meetings took place in July/August. One to one consultation meetings also take place with key people/stakeholders.
- The stages following the consultation have been;
  - Desk research
  - Consult strategic partners
  - Discuss findings with the working group
  - Finalise pillars and vision
  - Develop key tasks and metrics
  - Develop risk register
  - Prepare draft strategic plan
  - Strategic plan approved by the board
  - Launch strategic plan
- The above work has been ongoing over the last couple of months.
- Estimated time frame for a launch is November 2021.

### Single Platform

- The 'Single Platform' project work is on-going with the SP working group meeting regularly to review the work towards its introduction/launch in the autumn.
- Peter O'Halloran, the lead, has a separate report with more detail on the project.

### Women in Sport

- We applied to Sport Ireland for a Women in Sport grant for a number of projects from NGB to WIS applications made on behalf of clubs.
- Sport Ireland wrote to us on May 27<sup>th</sup> to inform us that we were allocated €15k for 2021 and €15k for 2022.
- WIS projects for 2021 in 8 clubs were approved for grant aid by the board.
- A Racquet Sports Coaches Leadership Programme for female coaches was organised between the four Racquet sports – Irish Squash, Tennis Ireland, Badminton Ireland and Table Tennis Ireland. Jennifer Dillon acted as the Irish Squash ambassador on the promotional video. Young aspiring female coaches will attend four webinars on Sports Psychology, Leadership Skills, Performance Analysis & Communication Skills online and a fifth week with a face-to-face meet-up. Three female squash coaches have signed up to attend the course.

### EGM

- The EGM took place on Sept 5<sup>th</sup> with 33 members at the virtual meeting on Google Meet. There was one proxy vote received.
- Two motions were voted on and overwhelmingly passed.
- One was on a term limit for board members with a lifetime term limit of 16 yrs.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> motion was a minimum quota of 30% for either gender on the board.

### ACTIVITIES

Notwithstanding all the restrictions, we had a lot of 'squash activity' on-line, from coaching webinars to strength & Conditioning classes with Derek Ryan and also online 'tournaments'.

Thanks to Derek for all his hard work with all the sessions and events. It was great to see Aisling Blake again involved with Irish Squash. She did a superb job interviewing all the top players in the webinars earlier this year.

We also got permission from Sport Ireland for our top home based players to train together in a controlled hub from April detailed below.

### Coaching Webinars

- The series of six webinars featuring some of the best female & male players/coaches in the world were run in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2021.
- They included: David Evans, Performance Director Squash Wales, Haitham Effat, former Egyptian national coach, Ali Farag, World No.1, Camille Serme, World No. 3 (deputised for Nouran Gohar), Mostafa Asal, twice World junior champion and Mazen Hesham, world No. 14.
- The series was very well received with numbers of up to 180 tuning in.
- A second series of 4 webinars took place in July with Laura Massaro, Ramy Ashour & Derek Ryan. Aisling did the hosting for Laura and Ramy and once again she was so natural, insightful and enjoyable to watch with the players.

### On-line Competitions/S&C classes

- A junior online Home International with players from Ireland, England, Scotland & Wales was launched, with players doing S&C sessions with Derek Ryan; to mimic a weekend tournament with 4 sessions - Friday night, Saturday morning & evening and Sunday morning. Players got points for attending and there were bonus points also available to players.
- 53 junior players from Ireland registered to participate.
- A Masters HI international event was held from 26<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> of March, with the same structure as the junior event above – 4 sessions - Friday night, Saturday morning & evening and Sunday morning.
- A 12-week S&C programme was launched on April 5<sup>th</sup> with a class for U13/15's – 51 players registered.
- On April 7<sup>th</sup> there were 2 classes – a U17/19's where 28 players registered and a senior class where 134 players registered.
- There has also been a Masters class on Thursdays in March/April and a Saturday Squash FIT class was also done, which was a high intensity S&C total body workout.
- In mid-April, a virtual Junior European Championships was held, with the same structure as the Masters & Junior HI internationals, as outlined above. 7 countries entered.
- There was a very positive reaction to all the classes, for all the age grades with several emails received –
  - *'I write to express my thanks to Irish Squash for organizing the 12 weekly online Strength & Conditioning Classes with Derek Ryan. I didn't necessarily enjoy doing the sessions – they were often hard work! – But I certainly enjoyed having done the sessions. Please pass on my appreciation to Derek. Thank you'*
- Derek also did 'Solo Squash & Movement' in August with the masters groups in preparation towards match play, after such a long layoff from matches. It is important that the return by players is done in a careful way, so as to avoid injury, by coming back too quickly.

### PSA Hub

- In April, following months of lobbying, Sport Ireland (SI) gave permission for a pilot Elite training group to proceed in a controlled way.
- The pilot started on w/c April 26<sup>th</sup> with two pods of 4 players.
- The group is coached/managed by Eoin Ryan and the training takes place in Sutton with daily Antigen testing done on all the players.
- Two PSA satellite tournaments have been held in late Aug & mid Sept for 8 players. A third event is on Oct 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>.

### World Squash Day

- WSD is on Saturday October 9<sup>th</sup>. It is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event.
- Now that clubs and individuals can play, this is a perfect opportunity for clubs to organise a day to 'Restart Squash Day' in their club, after Covid.
- We hope to organise a competition for clubs for the best activity. Prizes of squash equipment will be on offer for the best entry.

### Paul Nugent

COO of Irish Squash

## Strategic Plan Report for 2020 - 2021

As part of the board's work on improving governance structures and compliance with Sport Ireland's Code of Governance, a separate working group was established to address our need for a new strategic plan. A review of our previous plan (2014- 2017) was completed and groundwork for a new plan put in place, including a review of examples of successful strategic plans from other organisations and sports.

The board decided that external expertise was necessary in preparing a Strategic Plan for Irish Squash and successfully applied for funding for this as a special project from Sport Ireland. After consideration of various providers, Sport2Sport were engaged for this work.

Key drivers for the project are to comply with the Sport Ireland Governance Code and to improve the organisation's position to justify increased funding from a variety of sources in the longer term. We are broadly aligning our strategy with that of Sport Ireland and the National Sports Policy. Other areas being addressed are the visibility and popularity of the sport and the need to professionalise Irish Squash and thereby improve our capacity to deliver on our objectives.

Sport2Sport have facilitated a process of independent engagement with the squash community through the use of an online survey and by conducting video calls with different stakeholder groups/individuals. Feedback is provided to the working group by Sport2Sport following data analysis.

Regular meetings are held between Sport2Sport and the working group to agree key strategic areas prior to preparing a draft plan which is expected by mid-October 2021.

We aim to launch our new Strategic Plan at a separate event in November 2021 for our members and that it will become operational from January 2022.

Sincere thanks to all members of the working group for the many hours of genuine commitment to this work: Anne Costello, Mark McGugan, Peter O'Halloran, Christine Lowry, Eugene Walker, Paul Nugent, Sinead Day, John Dineen, Kevin Povall, Mark Gilliland, Eoin Ryan and Gar Holohan.

**Rosie Barry**  
**President Irish Squash**

## Governance Report for 2020 - 2021

The priority from a Governance perspective for Irish Squash for season 20-21 was clear. In common with other sports NGBs it would be necessary to complete a considerable body of work so that we would be compliant with Sport Ireland requirements. As many as 50 different documents from the Articles of Association to the Risk Register would need to be reviewed and amended where it proved necessary to bring our policies in line with best practice.

A sub-committee comprising C.O.O. Paul Nugent, Anne Costello, Mark McGugan and Lee Healy together with professional outside assistance has worked on this overall area since the beginning of the season (under the guidance of President, Rosie Barry).

After many meetings and considerable work – at all stages with the cooperation and approval of the Board – we can now report that Irish Squash will meet its obligation to fully adopt the Code for Sport before the end of 2021, the date prescribed by Sport Ireland.

Apart from the not inconsiderable fact that future funding depended on the adoption of *The Code* it can also be affirmed that our revised policies provide best practice in the area of Governance and are of significant benefit to Irish Squash as it progresses.

**Lee Healy**  
**Chair of Governance sub-committee 2020-2021**

### **Women in Sport Report 2020 - 2021**

Clubs were invited to submit applications for Women in Sport programs focussing on introducing primary and secondary school pupils to squash. Programs to encourage new adult women squash players were also submitted. Sport Ireland awarded €15k for these programs in 2020 but due to Covid pandemic restrictions, these programs were unable to proceed. The funding will support Women in Sport programs in 2021/22 instead.

Irish Squash sponsored Anne Costello and Rosie Barry in attending Women in Sport Leadership Programmes in early 2021. This is a highly sought after 8-week course delivered online by consultants Lisa Clancy and Sarah O'Shea. The course provides training, guidance and expertise to support women in leadership roles. Over 100 participants from 25 sporting bodies have completed these courses to date.

Irish Squash plans to support future candidates for this course from our clubs and provinces.

**Rosie Barry**  
**President**

### **Single Platform Project Report from June 2020 - October 2021**

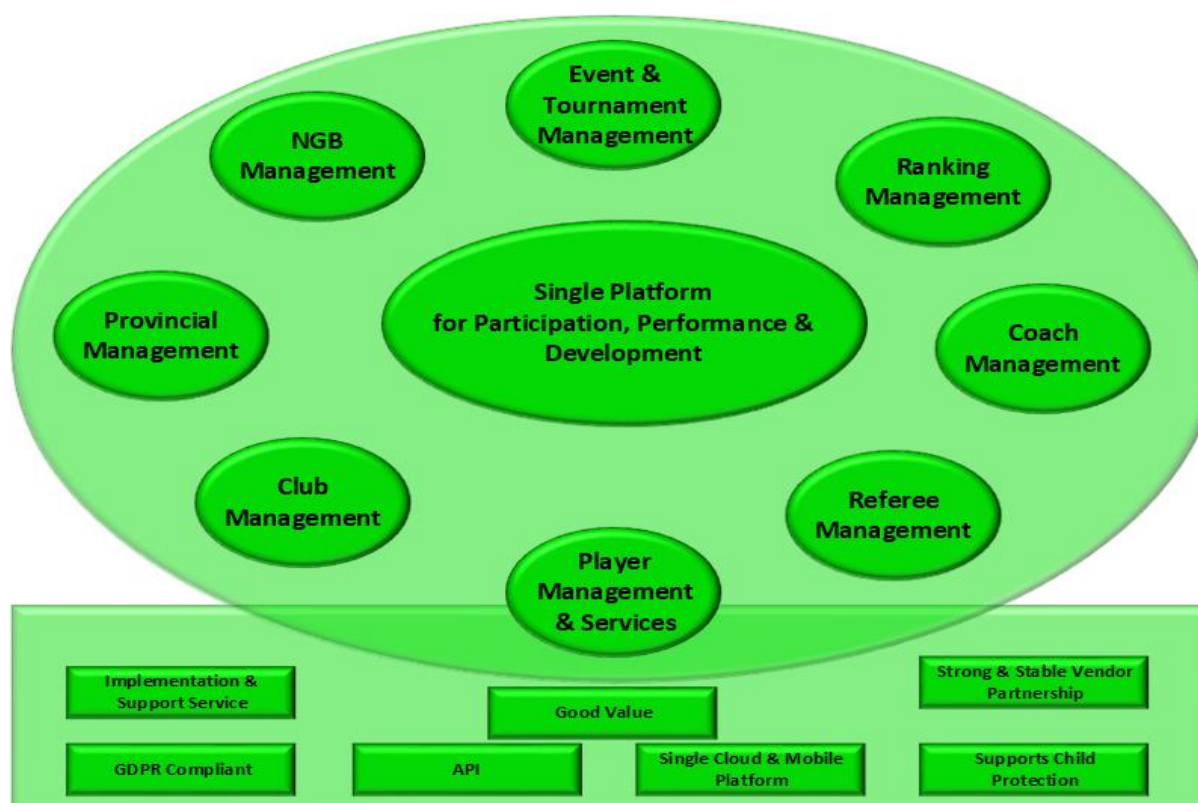
#### **Introduction**

The “Single Platform Project” is an initiative that was given the go-ahead by the Board of Irish Squash in June of 2020. The objective of the project is to identify, select and implement a technology platform that will achieve the following for the Irish Squash Community;

- Provides a high quality “Service” to the Player, Club, Province & NGB
- Promotes and sustains a single connected “community”
- Acts as the authoritative repository of information for Squash in Ireland
- Optimises the time and expense of the community
- Acts as a springboard for Innovation & Knowledge Sharing
- Underpins Policies – Child Protection, Data Security, Ranking & Selection

### Single Platform Requirements Overview

The following diagram illustrates the variety of areas that will be addressed by the Single Platform.



### Achievements to date

Since the project kicked off the Board of Irish Squash has been continuously informed of progress and a lot has been achieved;

- Team Assembled from the Irish Squash Community (July 2020)
- Irish Squash Commercial & Functional Requirements consolidated and approved.
- Request for Proposal issued & proposals received from four candidates (September 2020)
- Testimonials were received from Squash federations in South African, Scottish, Australian, Norwegian Squash and Canada using these candidate systems.
- Demonstrations were delivered by the participating candidates.
- SportyHQ was selected as the technology partner of the Single Platform on the basis of functional fit, testimonials, demonstrations, commercial terms and services on offer.
- A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) was undertaken by BH Consulting (Security Consultants) in (December 2020)
- A comprehensive Service Agreement was created, negotiated and signed with SportyHQ for a term of five years starting in April 2021
- The Irish Squash Data Protection Policy Upgraded (May 2021)
- A new Data Sharing Agreement was designed to underpin arrangements between the Club, Province and Irish Squash.
- The SportyHQ service was migrated and hosted in an Irish Data Centre (Amazon).
- The Affiliation Policy has been updated
- Rating & Ranking Policy has been updated
- Irish Squash and Provinces setup on the platform and live (September 2021)
- Pilot Club - Westport Squash Club goes Live (September 2021)

### Benefits of The Single Platform

- The Player
  - One place to engage & stay in touch with Squash in Ireland and beyond.
  - A single national player rating
  - Records playing history
  - Offers full control of their Data Privacy
  - On-line Booking and Tournament Registration
  
- The Club & Administrator
  - The Club Service is a **benefit** of Irish Squash Affiliation
  - The Service that will help the club manage
    - Membership & Communication,
    - Court Bookings and Policy,
    - Performance & Competition
    - Web-Site Integration & Hosting
  - On-line Credit Card processing for club events
  - Integrated and simple Squash Affiliation process (Bulk Renewals)
  - Mobile booking app for your members
  - System Integration to other established Club Systems
  
- The Coach, Referee and Tournament Organiser
  - Standard Competitive System in the Club, Province & Nationally
  - Standard Player Rating to assist in tournament design & player seeding
  - Over 60 tournament formats to call upon to stimulate play
  - Integrated Mobile Scoring App
  - Audio Visual integration at Tournaments for better player & audience engagement
  
- Provinces & Irish Squash
  - Single Player, Coach & Referee Register
  - Standard Affiliation Management
  - One Event (Tournaments, Leagues & Training) Management Platform
  - Simple and accurate Communication & Announcements
  - Website Integration
  - GDPR Support
  - On-line Credit Card Facilities

It is expected that the adoption of the platform by the Club will happen over time. A benefit of the platform's design is that it will function effectively on the basis that the Club will on-board the platform when they are **ready, willing and able**.

The Service Agreement signed with SportyHQ will offer the Player, Club and Provinces services that will assist in the adoption, implementation and on-going use of the service. SportyHQ has a comprehensive set of training material and continuously adds this to their YouTube site.

So please visit and subscribe to stay in touch with what SportyHQ can offer below;

**<https://www.youtube.com/user/sportyhq>**

If you are a club representative that is interested in hearing more about what this platform can do for your club please **click on the following link** to complete the short questionnaire and we will be back in touch

**[Expression of Interest in the Single Platform](#)**



### Next Steps

The project team will be progressively opening up the use of the platform over the coming months. In light of this we shall be communicating with Provinces, Clubs, Players, Coaches and Referees as and when appropriate.

Here are some of the coming events

- Complete the data migration of historic data November 2021
  - Finalise Player Register
  - Upload Player Results (from 2005 on)
  - Establish Player Rating
- Pilot Clubs in Leinster, Munster and Ulster go-live.
- Irish Squash and Provinces host Tournaments and Leagues on the Platform from October 2021
- Tour Points Ranking List for Juniors, Senior Men and Women & Masters established by the end of the year.
- Communications to Clubs and Players starts October 2021
- Affiliation Process SportyHQ tested and live by December 2021
- Launch of integrated Irish Squash Web-site December 2021

### A Word of Thanks

As you can see, a lot has been achieved. We are close to rolling out what we expect will be a very positive development in our sport in Ireland. In light of this a word of thanks to many who have got us to here;

- First to Sport Ireland for their continued support.



- To those international Squash Governing Bodies that freely gave their time and shared their experience and insight to help us identify and select the candidate that best suited our requirements.



- And finally, a big thanks to the project team who have given of their time to get to where we are. This continues to be a real community effort, drawing upon their “day job” expertise and experience volunteering in Clubs, Provinces and Irish Squash.





The team is;

*Andrew Gillespie, Anne Costello, Brian O'Brien, Conor O'Hare, Conor O'Neil, David Ayerst, David Noone, Eugene Walker, Gerry Callanan, Gerry Galvin, Karam Singh, Lynda Dunlop, Mark Gilliland, Mark McGugan, Niall Brennan, Conor O' Neill, Josh McVeigh, Mark Gilliland, Gavin Lestrangle, Mick Collins, Niall Rooney, Paul Conroy, Paul Nugent, Peter O'Halloran, Rosie Barry, Stephen Fassenfeld*

So please watch out for increased communications from the team. If you wish to get further information ahead of that please click on the link above, members of Irish Squash, your provincial representative, or any member of the Project team for any further detail.

**Peter O'Halloran**  
**Project Lead of Single Platform Project**  
**Leinster Representative Irish Squash**  
[leinsterrep@irishsquash.com](mailto:leinsterrep@irishsquash.com)