

Winchester Racquets and Fitness



Tennis Chairman's Annual Report 2014

Progress and improvement continues to the theme at our club again during the past twelve months. This progress has been just as great off court as on as the club continues to gain momentum to build a structure which will ensure our members receive a first class service in a first class environment.

Twelve months ago at our request, Nick Elliot, Tennis Director of White Horse Tennis Centre at Abingdon and also a LTA Coach Education tutor undertook a review of the service provided to our tennis members. His brief was to look at our service and if necessary make recommendations to improve it. Armed with information received from all areas of the club ie General Manager, committee members, coaches and members Nick was immediately impressed with our club and also the scale of our coaching programme offered to adults and children. However Nick did come back to us with a number of recommendations which the club were happy to implement. Nick's key recommendation was that we should appoint a Head of Player Development who would be responsible for delivering a quality programme particularly in the "performance end" and also managing talent id, player movement, fitness links, competition planning, tournament visits.

This position was subsequently advertised and following considerable interest, internally and externally, Andy Sheridan was offered the position. Andy soon got to grips with his role allowing our tennis manager, Alison Beard, to concentrate on managing the tennis programme at our club.

The benefit in separating the day to day running of the tennis programme from the development of players is that there could be a much more focused approach to both parts of the operation. Both roles are time consuming and by spreading this load over the two roles each role could receive full focus and attention.

This club has a fantastic record of bringing through youngsters to play tennis at a high level. With this in mind I would like to praise our coaching staff and in particular Alison Beard, Andy Sheridan, Alex Ross, Sue Espley, Kris Dymond, Hannah Crawford, Jordan Robinson and more recently Karim Aouichaoui who joined us from David Lloyd Southampton last September. Karim has in fact just been nominated for two national LTA awards, Performance Coach of the Year and also Children's Coach of the Year, and was highly placed in each category. Well done indeed.

Following the appointment of Andy we said goodbye to one of our senior coaches, Julian Godfrey. Julian has been a coach at this club for many years and delivered quality coaching and advice to many of our members. He went with our good wishes for the future.

At this stage on my report I would like to highlight the following;

Finance - This year the tennis section net contribution to the club is very slightly up at £259,434

Income – Indoor court income is slightly up on last year at £59,210 while coaching income continues to rise (£154,297). The net coaching contribution is down on last year mainly as result of the cost of the new coaching appointments and the costs of recruiting a tennis apprentice, Alex Fyfe. However the longer term result of this investment in the programme will see our net contribution rise in the next year and beyond.

Membership levels – adult tennis membership has increased from 322 to 345, gold members slightly down at 154 (last year 159) while the coaching programme restructure which includes membership as part of attending weekly squad sessions means that we now have 600 junior rackets members.

Tennis programme – The programme continues to grow and we are now running 85 coaching squads every week, 2 coach led ladies mornings, a new coach led Thursday mix in, Friday club night, junior super Sunday match play sessions and more schools outreach coaching than in previous years.

University of Winchester/Peter Symonds - we have formed partnerships with the University and Peter Symonds sixth form college. As a result of these partnerships students between the ages of 17-22 are using the club at quieter times and giving the place a fresh buzz. I am advised on one particular Wednesday afternoon we had around 75 students on all courts at the same time. Thanks to Alison Beard for taking over the Peter Symonds tennis programme which includes team tennis.

Schools – Our schools work with Weeke and Western primary schools continues to bring new young players into the programme and the result of this partnership over the past few years is evident in the fact that Westgate School is thriving with two teams in some year groups in inter schools competitions – we host all matches at the club.

We have come to expect success from our various club teams. However it is the ladies that take centre stage this year as our A team not only retained the Hampshire and IOW title again this year but also had an outstanding run in the National Tennis League last summer and consequently find themselves in the South West Regional Division this year. This division is one step below the National Open Division.

Our Men's A team could not quite retain their Hampshire and IOW title and finished second in the top division on set average to West Hants Tennis Club. Never the less, a great effort especially after losing the services of Elliot Wood, who moved abroad, and also Alex Ross from the previous year's team.

We have numerous other teams representing the club. The Apsley A team won the Apsley League, all the men's winter teams won their respective divisions although the A team could not hold on to the Men's Solent Trophy which is played between the winners of the Portsmouth and Southampton leagues. The Ladies A team defended the Southampton Winter league title successfully as well defeating the winners of the Portsmouth Ladies league to retain the Woman's Solent Trophy. Our Sarum League team finished top of the pile in their league and all our various veteran teams took titles in their respective leagues/divisions.

I would like to give a special mention in this report to David Trew who is handing over the reigns as box league organiser at our club after three years. Al Taylor and Linda Atkins will be taking over the running of these popular competitions and my, and the clubs, thanks go to David for the effort he has put into this competition which has involved almost one hundred and fifty members in not only competitive but also social tennis.

This is my final report having held the position as Chairman for the past three and a half years. It has been a wonderful time and I would like to thank our hard working committee members and in particular Mark Finlayson, Peter Friedmann, Liz Davies, Rob Gwilliam, Marie Gabriella Shea, Al Taylor and Sue Hitchen. I should not forget Denise Bruss, Judy Ames and Stuart Levy who also served on the committee during the first two years of being chairman.

During the past three years the club has moved forward considerably. We have implemented a very successful coaching programme due mainly to having the right staff to provide our desire to be the preferred place for tennis locally, our indoor courts now provide tennis all year round whatever the weather is like outdoors, in the past year we have laid two new clay courts and also resurfaced and repainted courts 12/13 which are now proving popular with juniors and adults alike. Four floodlights on courts 4,5,6 and 7 have also been installed. It is also particularly pleasing that the loss of our top junior players has been stemmed to clubs such as David Lloyd and Hampshire Club in recognition of the programmes we run at Winchester.

The club we have at Winchester is one to be proud of and I would finally like to pay tribute to work done by Billy Kerr. Billy, and his team, work tirelessly to improve all sections of our club. Thankfully the club atmosphere is still very much evident at Winchester despite recognising the need to operate in a more commercial and business-like manner.

Finally I wish Mark Finlayson every success as my successor as Chairman of the Tennis Committee.

Enjoy your tennis

Phil Baker

