



Essex Squash & Racketball Association



Draft Minutes of the Essex Squash & Racketball Association AGM Held via Zoom Wednesday 26th July 2023

Present (committee): Geoff Went, , Elaine Oddie, Chris Vine, Paul Clark, Chris Vine, Dawn Robinson
Dave Neller, Gary Nisbet (Co-opted)

Apologies: , Chris Vine,

Present (clubs):

Essex Squash and Racketball Association 2023 AGM attendance		
	Club	Representative
1	Bishop Stortford	Stefan Burkwood
2	Maldon (park Drive)	Geoff Went/Paul Wallace/Mo Mahar
3	Clements	Elaine Oddie/Andrew Harvey
4	Frinton	Chris Vine
5	Kingswood	Mike Aley
6	Ongar	Tony Bickley/Shawn Lamont
7	Old Brentwood	None
8	David Lloyd(Gidea Park)	None
9	Redbridge	None
10	Thurrock	None
11	Walthamstow	Luke Mclaughlin
12	Woodford Wells	Jon Caton/Roy Francis
13	Hamptons(Marconi)	Dawn Robinson/Steve Impett
14	Connaught	Mark Kirkman
15	Lexden	John Van Heumen/Oscar Birch
16	England Squash Guest	Barbara Sanderson
Clubs attending (11 of 21 Essex affiliated clubs)		

Adoption of Previous Minutes - There were no comments. The meeting was asked to approve the 2022 minutes:

Proposed – Elaine Oddie (Clements), Seconder – Mark Kirkman (Connaught)

Adoption of the minutes was carried unanimously.

Annual Report Overview– Dave Neller

This last season 2022/23 has been quite a difficult year for Essex squash, (and also for UK squash). The growing economic and environmental pressures forcing many to re-think their costs to play and travel, and the difficulty of marketing squash to the populous in general, are resulting in a slow decline in our adult player base. Nearly all squash players know that once you start to play the game it becomes obsessive. But due to the ease of attracting adults to gym membership, most facilities overlook the opportunities to promote squash, which would normally result in a long term membership. And also facilities often do not value the potential of having a good coach with strong junior programs.

Fortunately, the future activities is not all doom and gloom, we are focusing our development efforts on getting young people involved, with schools programs, junior activities and taster sessions. This is fully aligned with England Squash and Sport England's strategies of sport participation, inclusiveness and diversity goals. We have provided significant funding to the new junior committee to help get these programs up and running. This is a longer term view to fill the gaps left by our ageing squash playing community.

As you may or maybe not are aware, Essex is a member of the London & South East Regional Forum (LSERF), which encompasses London, Kent, Sussex, Surrey & Middlesex and accounts for about 25% of the UK's squash facilities. LSERF is now the only successful and functioning forum in the UK and has full England Squash support. We meet regularly, discuss and share issues, common strategies etc., and because of the work we have been doing we have managed to get squash re-introduced to the London Youth games (LYG), which will involve not only London clubs but also those from the counties bordering London (like Redbridge etc.). We also recently had a mini show court in prime location at the Olympic Park, which was a great opportunity to showcase the sport.

Probably our biggest challenge is future funding of Essex Squash, as there are big changes coming with England Squash with the move to individual membership which will ultimately affect our rebate. Also, the gradual reduction of Essex League teams, which is our main source of income. We run on a very limited budget, our main expenditures are funding the county squads, a small amount for development and admin. So it is important that we do our best to grow participation for the future of Essex Squash.

With regard to County Squads, the selection criteria you all agreed to at the last AGM were a little flawed with some of the selection criteria. The main goal of the proposal was to increase the entry into the Essex Closed, not decimate the county team squads. It became apparent that a fairer selection process was needed and also clearer definition of how funds are



Essex Squash & Racketball Association



allocated and spent by the teams. This is something we are presently working on to resolve, and may well be influenced by our ability to raise funds.

From a committee perspective, we are here to manage the activities, you as players want in the county, this includes the county leagues, inter-county squads, junior programs, development, and county competitions. In addition we have to constitutionally manage certain aspects of the county governance, i.e. safeguarding, accounts, AGM, communication etc. As you know we are a voluntary organisation but we try where possible to act upon issues that may arise within the squash community. We are very open to constructive criticism, and welcome helpful advice or volunteers to take on some of the more challenging items, such as the county closed. Essex Squash needs your support, so please help us with the challenging times ahead, especially when it comes to the new England Squash affiliation program.

The Essex Closed ran very successfully at Lexdon, I would like to thank Mike Hegarty and his team for all his hard work in running the event, and look forward to holding the tournament at Lexdon again in 2023. Obviously, your support in entering is what makes these events a success from both the club and the sponsors perspective.

The recent England Squash Council meeting in May focussed mainly on the new individual membership system being launched soon. This moves to individuals paying direct to England Squash in a tiered system with defined tier benefits. Facilities will affiliate based on the number of courts only. This obviously will face some serious challenges in how ES market the packages and engage with individuals, so watch this space. They also discussed diversity, inclusion, environment, competitions etc. I can provide the briefing documents should any of you wish to have some light bedtime reading.

I would like to thank Gary Nisbet, who is stepping down this year after a successful couple of seasons managing the men's senior squad. I would also welcome Francesca Brook as the new junior chair replacing Vickie Prow and previously Karen Selby who left us with a very strong junior platform to build on and we thank them for all the hard work.

On a similar note I would like to personally thank all our committee members for the time they put in and work they have done voluntarily over the past year, and especially thank Chris Vine for all the support he gives both me and the County.

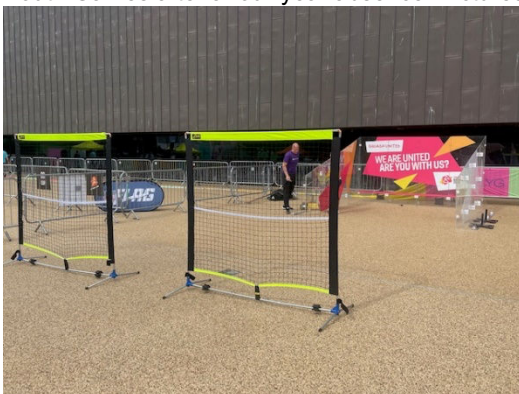
To close, in the future plans we will be focusing on delivering on the England Squash three initiatives, which are, 'Squash Stars', 'Inclusiveness & Diversity', and 'Talent', for which we have received funding. We can hopefully create the opportunity for all to participate in our wonderful sport. I wish you all well for the future and hope to see our courts filling with eager healthy people.

Essex Squash Development – Chris Vine

Looking back at my last Development for 2022, we have seen pretty much “more of the same” in that the clubs mentioned in last years report continue to do well. Park Drive Maldon is continuing its planned and, much appreciated by the members, improvement phases and squash features prominently in its regular social media posts. Walthamstow through the excellent efforts of Coach Trevor Grinsted and his team have ever increasing numbers in all aspects, schools, juniors, lady players and much busier courts. Other clubs doing well are Bishops Stortford, Lexden, Frinton, Woodford Wells and of course Off the Wall at the Garrison (who supply a majority of the county's junior players)

I reported last year that the old Courtlands (now Trugym Thorpe bay) had closed their courts – they are now re-open for use and negotiations are under way for the potential use (in some form) of the previously closed two courts at Harwich Sports centre. In summary it seems an upturn in the fortunes of squash and squash 57 is being experienced, however the formula for success remains the same – supportive management, good coaching (team), a vibrant squash activity program, leading to new participants and greater numbers starting to play the game.

I can also report that after almost two years of lobbying and three Inspire Schools Festivals (Redbridge – March, The Hive and Gunnersbury Park in Middlesex – May on successive days), plus two days of attendance outside the Copperbox Arena in the Olympic Park at the London Youth Games Finals, has resulted in Squash being accepted back in the London Youth Games after a four-year absence. Pictures below:



Very many thanks to Tim Taylor (Middlesex Squash Chair), and Trevor Grinsted and Vicky Ashworth (Walthamstow) for giving up their valuable week-end time to give many young Londoners a chance to have a go at squash.

This will give the clubs in the London Boroughs of Havering, Redbridge, and Waltham Forest a mandate to provide teams for next year's games (2024) and Vicky Ashworth and Trevor Grinsted have been tasked with ensuring that as many



Essex Squash & Racketball Association



boroughs, including if possible those currently without courts (Barking and Dagenham, Newham) send teams to the 2024 games. In the next few months through our joint liaison with the London and South-east Regional Forum (LSERF) we will be looking to secure funding via the LYG Foundation for a program of School Games participation events via the School Games Organisers network to expose the sport in as many schools in the Essex London boroughs and the wider London Region as we are able. This will underpin an expansion of junior numbers in the West region of Essex.

As ever we always need more coaches and without sounding like an old record, clubs in the county need to take a very good look at the massively successful Off the Wall Schools Squash and junior coaching program and replicate it around the county, imagine what a difference this would make if we could have three other similar operations in the West, South-east and the middle of the county?

At present we have 46 active coaches in the county. Level one's (15), level two's (16), level three's (11) and level fours (4). If those who are currently level one coaches are interested in becoming level two's, let me know and we can set up a course in Essex?

In other news, Vickie Prow and I were asked to go on BBC Essex Radio in January of this year to talk about Essex Junior Squash and I am liaising directly with the Essex Juniors to re-start the previously highly successful EJS Junior Grand Prix series starting in Sept/Oct of this year at selected clubs.

Finally, after much thought I am looking to step down as the county Development Officer in the next year (post AGM) so if you or anyone who reads this would like to step up, please let me know and I will contact you to discuss what is entailed? chrisakv@btinternet.com or (M) 07768 067044 – July 2023

Essex Ladies report – Dawn Robinson

Essex Ladies League - Kerry Munn

Summer 2022 league was won by Club Kingswood

Autumn 2023 league was won by Woodford Wells

Spring 2023 league was won by Woodford Wells

Summer 2023 league is to be decided on Monday 24th July and it will be between Walthamstow and Woodford Wells who wins.

Kingswood is unable to field a team from September and have informed the other teams and Elaine Oddie (for billing). The other teams will be having a meeting after their match on 24th July to decide what they want to do. If they continue, I am happy to continue to administer the league. There are only three teams now in the Ladies League.

Joan Witton memorable afternoon - Elaine Chubb

A squash event in memory of Joan Witton took place on Saturday 22nd April 2023 at Redbridge Sports & Leisure - a club where Joan had been a member for over 50 years.

Many of her friends and people she played squash with were there alongside a large number of Joan's family. It was a fitting tribute to Joan with some very good squash being played in an excellent atmosphere.

After the squash everyone gathered in the bar for refreshments and a raffle that raised £332 for Cancer Research UK.

County Report

Senior Team - Lara Newton capt

Results from first game:

1-1	Piper Tatum	1-1	Josie Barker	0	3	(0-3) 10/12 6/11 6/11
1-2	Michelle Higgins	1-2	Harriet Wight	0	3	(0-3) 0/11 0/11 0/11
1-3	Gemma Walton	1-3	Tegan Younger	0	3	(0-3) 3/11 5/11 7/11
1-4	Jackie Gregory	1-4	Emma Turnbull	0	3	(1-3) 5/11 11/6 6/11 5/11
1-5	Jennifer Wright	1-5	Lesley Vitty	0	3	(2-3) 9/11 9/11 11/6 11/3 5/11

Results from second game:

1-1	Katie Cox	1-1	Piper Tatum	3	0	(3-0) 11/6 11/9 11/3
1-2	Jasmine Thirst	1-2	Michelle Higgins	3	0	(3-1) 11/13 11/0 11/0 11/0
1-3	Nicky Green	1-3	Gemma Walton	3	0	(3-0) 11/3 11/7 12/10
1-4	Lucy cox	1-4	Jackie Gregory	3	0	(3-0) 11/1 11/3 11/5
1-5	Ava Fox	1-5	Jennifer Wright	3	0	(3-1) 10/12 11/4 11/6 11/3

First match was against a very competitive Northamptonshire, where players 3rd and 5th string were first on. With early defeats, it was down to the rest of the team and following defeats for 1st and 4th string players, Michelle who was playing second string decided not to play due to her back.

This put us in the play off's against Norfolk, where unfortunately we all lost our matches, where Michelle did decide to retire due to her back.

It was a great opportunity to represent the county and brilliant that Essex could get a team out, where there was some good squash played throughout the matches.



Essex Squash & Racketball Association



Hopefully we can come back as a stronger team next year.

O40s

This year we did not field a team, we are hoping to have a team for 2024.

O50s – Jackie Gregory Capt

The over 50 ladies squad enjoyed and benefited from our training sessions this season: one from Ben Coleman and one from myself

Stage 1 Vs Sussex

Jackie Gregory

Dawn Robinson

Sue Vine

Thank you to Sue for stepping up after several injuries and unavailable players

Sue Vine was battling her way to a 3-2 win when her opponent pulled up injured

Dawn playing extremely well against an opponent who managed to get everything back to win the match

Jackie playing with a virus not her usual running around lost her match

Stage 2 - Vs Middlesex

Alex King

Jackie Gregory

Susannah Martin

Susannah played excellent and won her match

Jackie back on form running took command and won her match

Alex first match back after injury found her form winning her match also

Essex Closed

The 2023 Essex Senior Closed Squash Championship returned over the weekend of 20th-22nd January, hosted for the second time at Lexden Rackets & Fitness Club in Colchester.

The event saw a breadth of Essex born or resident players descend on Lexden Rackets & Fitness Club in Colchester for a fun but tough weekend filled with over 120 matches over 15 playing categories. This was a significant increase from 9 the previous year.

Millane Contract Services Ltd donated the prize fund which was to be split equally across the Open A and Ladies A events, reflecting the event and sport's values of equality and inclusivity for all. To that end the event was a huge success. With a fantastic mix of Open, Ladies and age group categories there was a space for everyone.

The Ladies A event was won for the second time in a row by the talented Egyptian Law Student Fareda Elrakaybi. Fareda overcame top England junior Lara Newton 3-0 in a brilliant final. Local Nikki Taylor enjoyed a brilliant run of form in the tournament, pushing Fareda to four games in the semi final before defeating Loughborough University sports scholar Piper-Rose Tatum in a 5-game thriller to win the 3rd/4th playoff.

The Open A Event represented a changing of the guard somewhat, with the established Essex squash hierarchy falling to a group of teenagers all on phenomenal form. The Championship was won by 18 year old local Stan Sykes. Stan won the hard way. He started the competition unseeded and battled past his way past more experienced opponents in a pair of 5 game battles before taking out top seed Jon Matthews 3-1 in the semi final. Stan faced another top England junior Jamie Brown in the final. Stan won the first two games, before Jamie clawed his way back into the match, levelling the score at 2-2. The final game was nip-and-tuck, and it was a narrow 11-8 win to Stan in the fifth. A great final befitting the occasion. Jon Matthews beat another young 'upstart' in Nottingham University sports scholar Michael Tallentire 3-2 to win 3rd place.

As well as hosting elite competition, the event served to highlight and encourage squash across every age group and standard, from age groups all the way up to Over 70s to competition heavily featuring players competing in their first tournament.

Thanks to sponsors Millane Contract Services Ltd and Karakal for their continued support and without whom this event would not have been possible.

Full results

Open A - 1: Stan Sykes. 2: Jamie Brown. 3: Jon Matthews. 4: Michael Tallentire

Open A Plate - 1: Kieran Hillman. 2: Antony Savage

Ladies A – 1: Fareda Elrakaybi. 2: Lara Newton. 3: Nikki Taylor. 4: Piper-Rose Tatum

Ladies A Plate – 1: Amelie Brooke. 2: Gemma Walton

Open B – 1: Olly Horton. 2: Steve Smith

Open B Plate – 1: Sam Adeyemo. 2: Jimmy Lee

Open C – 1: Tony Bickley. 2: Rob Keogh

Open C Plate – 1: Andy Bridges. 2: Brian Clay

Open D – 1. Keanan Wood. 2. Louise Hunt

Open D Plate – 1. Shayle Barton. 2. Elaine Oddie

Mens Over 35 – 1: Rory Pennell. 2: Antony Savage

Mens Over 35 Plate – 1: Matt Deane.

Mens Over 40 – 1. Sam Adeyemo. 2. Richard Saunders

Mens Over 45/50 – 1. Paul Hodge. 2. Steve Smith

Mens Over 45/50 Plate – 1. Andrew Harvey. 2. Alan Pudney

Mens Over 55 – 1. Peter Hyde. 2. Shaun Lamont

Mens Over 55 Plate – 1. Mark Rendall. 2. Marcus Walton

Mens Over 60 – 1. Nigel Bacon. 2. Mark Shildrake

Mens Over 60 Plate – 1. Akhtar Khokhar

Mens Over 65 – 1. Wyn Edwards. 2. Brian Clay



Essex Squash & Racketball Association



Mens Over 70 – 1. Matt Rayner. 2. Geoff Went
Ladies Over 50 – 1: Lucy Pope. 2: Victoria Ashworth te Velde
Ladies Over 55 – 1. Nikki Taylor. 2. Dawn Robinson

Squash 57 – Racket ball – Patrick Osbourne

Essex Squash and Racket ball held their inaugural Open Squash57 Singles Championships Sunday 21st May

It was a hugely successfully day at The Woodford Wells Club (WW) with the Progress Tour Tennis finals being played in the glorious May sunshine adding to the overall enjoyment.

There were 6 titles up for grabs and a special mention should go to the 'les bienvenus' group who braved the squash courts in-front of a large audience, the RU being Avril Murphy (WW - a multi-time world squash champion) who lost out to Jill Marshall (Broxbourne - like daughter like mother?). The final of the O60's saw UKRB regulars Akhtar Khokhar (WW) defeat in form Martin Sawyer (Lings Squash Northampton). Dave McKenna (WW) is back from long-term injury troubles and cruised to victory in the O50's only dropping a game to David Morse (WW) who eventually came 3rd with Paul Chaplin (WW) stealing a march on him to get the RU slot. In the O40's it was Stacy Thickbroom (Kingswood) who won, taking full advantage of an early hamstring niggle that slowed down Peter Cossey (Surrey Sports Park) who was the eventual RU. Stacy did the double by also winning the 'OPEN B' category with Paul Chaplin as RU (again).

The 'OPEN A' event was a crowd puller. In the semi-finals Gareth Naidoo (WW) defeated old-timer Patrick Osborn (WW) 2-1 and Antony Savage (Kingswood) defeating Paul Wallace (Kingswood) in a marathon (17+ minutes/game) 2-0 affair. This was arguably the downfall of Tony who went down 2-0 to Gareth in the final.



Videos of some of the matches can be found in the YouTube video playlist here:
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQcNxkx40jivpdRq8DUXQ0N2Oegh6FwWF>

A huge thank you to everyone who helped out in the build-up and on the day including our sponsors Karakal and Reflex International

Squash57 Inter-County Championships 2023

The Inter-County Squash57 Championships were held in Nottingham June 17th/18th with Essex competing in the vets (MO50 + WO45) alongside Devon and Warwickshire in 'Pool A' with Northamptonshire, Shropshire & Surrey in 'Pool B'.

The Essex Team was: Patrick Osborn; David Morse; Akhtar Khokhar; Zoe Fennell & Paul Fennell. Each inter-county fixture consisted of 4 matches, 3 singles and 1 doubles.

The pool fixtures were held on Saturday and Essex's first fixture was against Warwickshire. After the first 2 matches had completed it was all square with a 3-1 win for each county. Similarly, after all 4 matches had been played it was a tie at 2-2 and we were into countback territory. With games tied at 7-7 it required a points countback with Essex losing out by 11 points across the 14 games. Next up was Devon and there was still all to play for. Again, it went down to a points countback, with Essex losing by 6 points across the 12 games. The last pool fixture of the day saw Devon draw with Warwickshire, winning on a game countback, and so Essex were 3rd in their pool and facing a 5th/6th place playoff on Sunday against Northamptonshire.

In Sunday's fixture it was more of the same for Essex with a 2-2 match draw requiring a games countback to give Essex victory 8-6 (25 points win). Shropshire won the 'Vets' final with a comprehensive win against Devon. Across the fixtures, Essex won 8 more points than their opponents but came 5th overall.



Essex Squash & Racketball Association



The results from the OPEN finals were:

- OPEN A - Devon beat Warwickshire 5-0
- OPEN B - Surrey beat Shropshire 3-1
- OPEN Ladies - Devon (A) beat Lincolnshire 3-1

Next year the format is expected to change, there will be more VETS age categories and the OPEN and Vets fixtures will be held on different weekends.

A huge thank you to all involved in the journey which started with the hugely successful Essex Open Doubles in January followed by the Essex Open Singles in May, both of which helped fund the Essex inter-county team. Thank you to Essex Squash for their help throughout and also to Karakal (www.karkal.com) who supplied the team shirts and Reflex International (www.reflexinternational.com) who printed them.

Men's League –Geoff Went

The league for autumn 2022/23 season has increased by one division now making it four divisions with 26 teams across the region. The summer was back down to 23 which is not unusual as some of the Premier teams always withdraw. Everyone now seems to be very experienced at using the LMS system and it runs well. Unfortunately there still seems to be too many re-arrangements. However this may be addressed at the League meeting.

If any clubs have less able people to play team squash then let me know

Men's League Results for 2022/23

Essex S.R.A Summer 2022

- Premier Barker Champions – **Hamptons**
- Premier Selby Champions– **David Lloyd (GP) [2]**
- Division #1E Champions – **Parkdrive [2]**
- Division #W Champions – **Connaught 3**

Essex S.R.A. Autumn 2022

- Premier Champions – **Woodford Wells (1)**
- Division 1E Champions – **Parkdrive (2)**
- Division 2E Champions – **Kingswood (2)**
- Division 1W Champions - **Woodford Wells (2)**

Essex S.R.A. Spring 2023

- Premier Champions – **Woodford Wells (1)**
- Division 1E Champions – **Kingswood (2)**
- Division 2E Champions – **David Lloyd (GP) [2]**
- Division 1W Champions - **Woodford Wells (2)**

Intercounties Seniors - Gary Nesbit/Mike Hegarty

Successful Inter-County weekend for the men - we lost to eventual winners Kent, but finished 5th overall. This retains our position in the Premier division for next season. We had a good blend of younger and older players in the squad from all across the county, all of whom acquitted themselves really well.

The team of Was Owen Taylor, Jon Matthews, Michael Aley, Michael Tallentire, Stan Sykes and Captain Gary Nisbet,

This year Essex decided to enter a second team in to the stage 1 of the seniors with mixed results – Unfortunately some team dropped out so only one match was played

The team was : Kieren Hillman, Joel Braddock, Michael Tallentire, Joe Blackmur, David Smith . Mike Heagrtly - Captain and team travelled to Coolhurst Lawn Tennis club.

Over 35s – Paul Wallace

Essex played Host to Middlesex, Norfolk and Hertfordshire .

It was certainly good to get back to Country Squash again that had been absent for nearly three years. We are now (7) years into this journey with only two losses to our name one of which hampered our chances of making the Finals in 2019.



Essex Squash & Racketball Association



Could we put that right in 2022? Versus reigning Champions Norfolk and a strong contingent of players from Middlesex! (Hertfordshire were unable to field a team)

Essex welcomes two new recruits for this fixture in Paul Blom (Connaught Club) and Andy Samuel (Woodford Wells) unfortunately due to a late injury Cliff Bennett could not play.

With Antony Savage, Myself the only 2 remaining players from the original team in 2015 and a newly created over 45's we let the older members David Smith and Malcolm McEwen step up to a more appropriate age group. With two home favourites Lee Jemmett / Paul Blom at the fantastic Connaught Club we were in for a great day of Squash.

Lee didn't disappoint the home crowd taking on leftie Mick Briggs at no1 (Mick currently England over 40's Captain and in great form) and what a Match it was Lee just missing out 11-9 in the fifth. Fair play to Mick he did some unbelievable retrieving to hang in with Lee.

I was on the other court playing a giant of a left hander Kris Anwar, but he had the skills to match his physique and proved too tricky for me on the day and I had a rare 3-0 defeat.

At that point it wasn't looking good for Essex 2-0 down 3 to play!! Game on!

Next up steps Antony Savage who thrives under pressure and another leftie Lucas Cannistraci from Argentina who was an ex pro. This was going to be a very tough match and what a match it was with Savage playing his best Squash to take a very well fought 3-0 victory to give Essex its first point.

Taking on a late replacement for Middlesex was Andy Samuel making his Essex debut. What a debut it was dropping only 9 points in total to equal the tie at 2-2.

It was left to another debutant Paul Blom to win Essex the match. Paul being all too familiar to Essex Squash since the Juniors was hot favourite with some great form this year only recently missing out on making the east region masters final by a couple of points (to Mick Briggs!)

True to form Paul sealed the win for Essex in a fairly comfortable manner 3-0 to give Essex a shot on topping the table.

Final Result Essex 16 – 6 Middlesex

Essex now had a break whilst Middlesex took on Norfolk.

The reigning champions were in no mood for hanging around with a convincing win 4-1 over Middlesex to set up the winner takes all match.

First on court Essex v Norfolk was Andy Samuel v club team mate Stuart Cowie. Stuart a former top 50 pro player with all the tricks in the trade to find a way to win was looking invincible taking the first game easily. However Andy didn't panic and grafted well and closed out a close 3rd game to lead 2-1. The 4th game was epic and was very close with Andy playing some great squash. Unfortunately for Stuart he pulled a calf muscle at 7-7 to concede the first match to Essex.

I was now looking to make amends for not collecting any points in are first match. It wasn't going to be easy as my opponent had already won. However, as Squash often proves different playing styles favours others. Or maybe the fact I wasn't playing a leftie which helped! Anyway I found my game against Norfolk's no#3 to take a close 3-0 victory. So instead of being 2-0 down as we were in are first match we were now 2-0 up and 1 game from victory !!

There was no easy games to follow for Essex to gain that one victory - on court now at no #1 Lee v Jamie Goodrich (GOAT Masters Champion!) and on the opposite court Paul Blom took on the hard hitting Neil Cross from Colchester/Norfolk!

As expected Paul v Neil Cross was nip and tuck with the ball flying around at lightening speed. Paul trying to come up with the winners to take the first game but a few errors cost him the first game 11-9.

Second game followed the first in similar fashion with just a couple of points between them but Neil managed to have the edge and again it was 11-9. Paul being a little frustrated with being 2-0 down gave Neil a healthy lead in the 3rd which gave him the confidence to hit winners and take the match 3-0.

Lee known for his amazing skill level may be underrated for his supreme fitness levels. Whilst the Essex squad took a break earlier Lee spent all that time on court training with the some of the best junior talent Essex has to offer. Therefore I wasn't expecting much from Lee, after that previous hard five setter match with Middlesex. However, Lee was not to disappoint as he was frustrating his opponent that had also won earlier and took a very close game 12-10. Lee's fitness stood firm and he raced off to a 11-4 win in the second. In the 3rd Lee had the match at 10 all and after some brutal rallies and it probably needed to be a 3-0 victory for Essex to win the group win. Lee did what he does best and finished off the game 12-10 and the match to Essex.

Essex had now guaranteed victory 3-1 to top the group.

Last on court to complete the tie was Antony v Marcus - knowing the match result was complete Marcus didn't put up much of a fight for Norfolk and that allowed Essex to complete the win 4-1.

Essex now progress to the finals weekend - the first time in many a year

I would like to thank all the players for taking part, Connaught Club for an excellent venue and Host, Essex Squash for their support and all are sponsor's especially Millane Ltd.

JUNIORS – Francesca Brooke

Essex Junior Squash Season 2022-2023

I joined the ship in January this year and have tried to steer it gently, rather than rock it. I have been involved with EJS, as a parent, for about 6 years and felt I could offer a calm, level, and amenable head, to a lovely group of people.



Essex Squash & Racketball Association



My daughter, Amelie, is a dedicated Junior squash player and I cannot thank the people that have been involved in her journey so far, enough. I am keen that more young people have access to the experiences that Amelie has had, and that is what brought me to the committee.

Having not been involved with the committee for very long this update is a mix of this season's comprehensive Newsletters, written by our Secretary, in addition to my own updates.

County Closed

The County Closed took place on the weekend of 1st/2nd October at Bishop's Stortford. Entry numbers were lower than 2021 by 30% which was disappointing particularly because we were not able to hold a tournament for the mixed u9s, girls u11, u13 and u15 and boys u11 (and Essex are reigning national u11 champions). This is not unique to Essex, other counties and regions are experiencing a similar fall off (more on this later).

Despite this rather gloomy picture there were some good performances and some cracking matches. Winners and runners up are as follows:

- Boys u13: Winner Kylen Calder, Runner up Cullen Clark
- Boys u15: Winner Dylan Smithson, Runner up Louis Brown
- Girls u17: Winner Renitha Srin dran, Runner up Imogen Fincken
- Boys u17: Winner Jamie Brown, Runner up Alex Banhidai
- Girls u19: Winner Lara Newton, Runner up Mikayla Mann
- Boys u19: Winner Stanley Sykes, Runner up Toby McBurney

Junior Inter Counties Championships 22/23

We entered 8 teams into the championships this year (2 x boys u19, boys u17, u15 and u13, girls u19, u17 and u13). Stage 1 for the boys took place on the weekend of 12th/13th November in Surrey, with coaches Jake and Aaron.

It proved to be a fantastic preliminary weekend with some of our boys putting in crucial performances, meaning that, as winners of their groups, the u13 and u19 boys 'A' progressed to the trophy finals on and the boys u17s to the plate finals. Our girls additionally fielded u13s, u17s and u19s teams giving Essex a total of 6 teams.

As always there was a great financial, and time cost involved in the Inter Counties Campaign and none of it would happen without the fantastic amount of dedication from coaches, players, parents and committee (during training and matches) which ultimately led to a great set of Finals results up in the Warwickshire area on the weekend of 25/26th March.

Just prior to the Finals we managed to secure some sponsorship for shirts, from Perrywood Garden Centre, as we were unable to provide all of the Juniors with county shirts this season which meant that, (at least meant that for the majority of the time) we looked like a team. A massive thank you also went to Andy Murray Ipro Sports who did us a huge favour on the cost of these.

22/23 Inter Counties Finals results

GU13 – 7th trophy final

GU17 – 1st plate final (5th overall)

GU19 – 2nd plate final (6th overall)

BU13 – 3rd trophy final

BU17 – 2nd plate final (10th overall)

BU19 – 3rd trophy final.

Essex Junior Open 15th April

Lexden Squash and Rackets Club welcomed over 60 junior players primarily from across the Eastern region for the Essex Junior Open. Compared to many bronze tournaments this was a very good entry. Essex players made up a significant portion of the entry and boasted 5 winners.

The tournament which was organised by Karen Selby and assisted on the day by many of the committee members was a huge success, running ahead of schedule and well received by all.

- **U9 Mixed:** Fran Sutton 1st, Harrison Selby 2nd
- **Bu13:** Kylen Calder 1st, Tristan Sutton 2nd, Noah Selby 3rd, Noah Smith 4th, Sasha Whiddon 7th, Harry Moore 9th, Thomas Eckford 14th
- **Bu15:** Matthew Sutton 2nd, Matthew McCoy 3rd, Mark Kapinos 4th, Leo Czarnowski 5th, William Barringer Allen 6th, Mason Damar 8th, Cullen Clark 9th
- **Bu17:** Louis Brown 3rd, Jonty Godfrey 4th, Rawdon Prothero 5th, Ellis Soopraven 6th, Matthew Salmon 7th
- **Bu19:** Stan Sykes 1st, Jamie Brown 2nd, Dylan Smithson 4th, Oren Goddard 5th, Max Newton 6th
- **Gu13:** Grace Woodhead 2nd, Jess Billings 5th
- **Gu17:** Amelie Brooke 1st, Imogen Fincken 2nd, Eleonore Dewey 4th
- **Gu19:** Lara Newton 1st, Sophie Foskett 5th

General Updates

Our Juniors are excelling nationally, and we currently have 15 juniors falling in the top 20 of their relevant England ranking groups.

Finances are going to be the committee's main focus next season – and we are hoping to secure some sponsorship. We are keen to run more events for the juniors (friendlies) and some trials for the county squad.

I think it is fair to say that EJS has had a bumpy time recently but the level of passion that the committee now holds is measurable. Time, as always is a real issue for most of the committee, as most have juniors (as well as other family commitments), jobs etc that make spare time a little like gold dust.



Essex Squash & Racketball Association



I am keen to re-energise the junior county scene in Essex and allow our wonderful children to excel and be proud of their achievements.
I am looking forward to starting next season with real energy as the end of this season has always felt like something we just needed to get through.

Referee & Marking – Paul Clarke(Co opted)

Congratulations to Andrew "Andy" Sweeney who was promoted to Level 3/National grade Referee in January this year although England Squash only formally confirmed this within the last two weeks.

Paul Clarke and Andrew Sweeney represented both Essex and England at various UK & overseas events including Gibraltar, Dublin and Prague.

No formal training events have been undertaken by ES who now encourage all players and those interested in Refereeing to sign up to the World Squash Officiating site, I have arranged with a fellow Referee to hold a Referee/marker seminar at a weekend for a small fee. If anyone is interested contact me.

I will be sending an email to club officials in the next few weeks promoting refereeing.
For more information please contact me Paul Clarke Tel: 07821 985529 email: clarke1956@btinternet.com

Financial Report - Elaine Oddie

The accounts up until 31st May 2023 much expenditure with not much income were presented On line via a screen share) Income. Fee for Essex League has not been collected for three years due to Covid. Tee shirts were provided for all the teams in 2021. Budget for next year will be determine on how many weekends the will be for the intercounties. The League fees for the interclub will be the subject of League meeting in two weeks times

Adoption of accounts was proposed by John Van Heuman(Lexden) Seconder by Mike Aley (Kingswood)
Adoption of the Accounts was carried unanimously

Election of Officers - Geoff Went once again confirmed that, he would like to step down as secretary but if no volunteers then he would continue.
One nomination was received for Paul Clarke for election to the committee.

Proposed 2023/2024 ESRA Committee:

Chairman & ES Council Delegate	David Neller
Treasurer and Deputy Chairman	Elaine Oddie
County Secretary	Geoff Went
Junior Representative & Junior Committee Chair	Francesca Brooke
Referee & Marking Coordinator	Paul Clarke
County Development Officer & Coaching	Chris Vine
League Secretary	Geoff Went
Ladies Coordinator	TBD
Men's Senior Captain	Mike Aley(co-opted)
Intercounty Coordinator	Mark Kirkman
Media Coordinator	Tony Bickley
TBA	Member
Web site	David Neller
Masters Off Peak Secretary	TBD
Racquet Ball Manager	Vacant

Election of ESRA Officers – Tony Bickley has been nominated as media cordinator
Proposed by- Proposed by Elaine Oddie (Clements) and seconded by John Van Heuman(Lexden)
The meeting was asked to approve the proposed ESRA committee for the coming year:
Carried unanimously

Any Other Business (AGM) –

- Lexden proposed that they would like to build on the success of the Essex Closed held this year in 2023 for next year 2024. This was agreed that Lexden have the remit to go ahead with the planning for next year.

AGM meeting closed at 8:20pm



Men's/Ladies League Meeting

The ladies were to have discussions at a later date for the future of the Ladies league.
Zoom meeting continued for the Men's meeting to discuss the following agenda .

1. *One League cycle for Essex Premier which means that the season will run from late September/early October to March/April the following year. As an example with eight teams playing 14 matches these would be over 28 weeks. This allows for almost the whole of December to be free of a match . This was agreed*
2. *one League cycle for Essex Div. West – again running from late September/early October to March/April the following year. Same as .1. This was agreed*
3. *Merge 2 East Div. 1 Leagues and one League Cycle late September/early October to March/April the following year. Same as 1. This was agreed*
4. *A Cup tournament for each of the divisions to make up loss of fixtures by only having once cycle- Jonathan Caton has kindly volunteered to come up with a proposed format. Accepted but it would appear That Mike Hegarty has a very good Team Knockout Cup competition format and that is what will be used.*
5. *Proposal is to have a Three person teams in summer session. This proposal was not accepted and meeting agreed that the five person team for the Summer session will be kept.*
6. *Proposal to Revise to rule 4.6.*
 - a. *At present the 4.6 rule is. Once a Reserve player has played two games for any team within that club, a third game for that team will render him locked to that team after which, Rule 5 will apply to said Player for the remainder of the season. A third game for that team will render him locked to that team after which, said Player may only play up a Division for their club and not down as per Rule 5.3. The number of games played "up" by any player is reset to zero at the start of each new season . Rule to be revised to read. Each Team must register, with the league secretary, their first choice of [7] players per team, with all other club players registered as Reserve-This means that a Player can play up many times with no restrictions. (The nominated players shall NOT play for a lower team)*
7. *The proposal is to remove the £35 requirement for home and away and for team captains to decide on whether they share the cost on the night by halving the cost. Meeting agreed that it will now be £50*
8. *Proposal is to remove the Food and drink requirement and just make it Drinks at the end of the fixture. As generally the finish of match is quite late to be eating. NOT Agreed*

Meeting closed at 9:50