



**Squash BC Planning Session**  
**May 26, 2018, 11:30 am – 12:30 & 1:30 – 3:30 pm**  
**University of Victoria**

Location: University of Victoria  
Cadboro Commons, Arbutus/Queenswood Room  
3800 Finnerty Road  
Victoria, BC V8P

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Voting:** Benjamin Uliana, Jimmy Valliere Markus Wenzel, Vicky Lust, Jenna Sherven, Stuart Dixon, Cathy Brown, Cam Martyna, Shawn Zwierzchowski, Rahim Jessa, Sean Baker

**Non-Voting:** Gerry Poulton, Ian Sefton, Brooke Herring, Rodney Herring, Brian McGaw, John Roche, Daniel Sokolov, Liz Macey, Rory Johnston, Rachel Au

**Squash BC Board:** Natasha Doucas (SQBC President), George James (Finance), Bruce Matthews, Donaldda Meyers, Jimmy Valliere,

**Squash BC Staff Team:** Nancy Thompson, Liana Schou, Joanne Veltri, Olivia Lam

**INTRODUCTIONS AND OVERVIEW**

Overview of the purpose of the Planning Meeting

It has been a long standing tradition at the AGM that a meeting of the members is held in conjunction to share information about squash in the province as well as ideas on how to grow and strengthen our sport. The meeting is open to all members and non-members and is not a voting type meeting.

**SQBC UPDATE AND HIGHLIGHTS**

Update on Change Leadership Model:

- Sport organizations in BC have traditionally worked under one executive director, and this approach has proven problematic. With the support of viaSport, Squash BC's (SQBC) Change Leadership Model (CLM) is a pilot for a new leadership model for sport organizations in the province. Six other sports are currently in a similar position to SQBC.
- Hiring staff in another way is important in the CLM to ensure consistency in the office for support. Currently the SQBC office consists of the Executive Director (ED), Business Development Coordinator, Member Services and Operations Coordinator and Community Relations Coordinator. All staff are part time varying from 1.5 days to 4.5 days per week.
- Current structure allows SQBC to have the bandwidth to handle the work and to enhance programs and services in new areas.
- Working with other sports, future projects will be explored and developed, which viaSport is happy to provide support for.

Memberships and Leadership:

- Club memberships increased this year: from 32 (2017) to 36 (2018), reflecting Tom Bedore's efforts in reaching out in person to clubs and encouraging them to join/rejoin.

- SQBC lost some club memberships this year, while individual membership numbers are similar this year. Fluctuations in numbers appear to revolve around SQBC's reminder (or lack of) to renew memberships and may be important to note henceforth.
- SQBC currently has 4 directors which is a little low – should aim for at least six directors.

## Issues and Challenges:

- Closures of courts/clubs in the Fraser Valley and other - Need to put some emphasis this year in how to gain courts/maintain courts
- Developing Officials & Coaches → foundational pieces to game of squash and there is a gap at this time in both programs

## National Results:

- 2018 Cdn Juniors in April - BC placed overall better than Ontario for the first time ever
- 2018 Cdns in Calgary in May – BC had a large contingent of players participating with good results.
- Strong group of juniors from U11 and up
- More kids playing

## Squash Canada Update

- SQCAN conducts quarterly calls with provincial EDs & Presidents → agenda covers a lot of ground and allows SQCAN to connect with provincial orgs
- Martin Heath (High Performance Director) and Graeme Williams (athlete pathway Manager) have been hired for 1.5days/week each to work on high performance
- Club Locker change: Unified ranking/membership management system was a unanimous decision by all the provinces.
  - SQCAN recommended Club Locker as the ranking system to be used nationally.
  - SportyHQ was considered but ultimately not chosen by SQCAN
  - SQBC has an existing contract with SportyHQ; eventually will need to move to Club Locker; what is the transition process??
  - 7 provinces have confirmed that they are transitioning to Club Locker including: Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba, SK
  - SQBC can start talking about this transition process → need to form a task form to tackle this transition
  - Club Locker has a rankings and ratings system – more information will follow as SQBC learns more about Club Locker
- Squash Day in Canada (Sept)
  - Last year was well received nationwide
  - SQCAN and the provinces agreed to do it again this year. No date set yet.
  - Last year, it was the same as our women's squash week which wasn't necessarily an issue but may have lost some additional opportunities to profile squash in BC
- Youth Olympics (Brazil)
  - Squash will be an exhibition sport at the Youth Olympics
  - Canada has been selected to have one athlete play. Athlete is James Flynn from Ontario. Two BC female athletes were considered in the process.  
(only 2 athletes from North America overall)

## **2018 SQUASH BC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Planning meeting was stopped while the 2018 SQBC AGM was held.  
See the 2018 AGM Minutes for details.

## **PRESENTATION OF THE SQUASH CANADA CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT TO STUART DIXON**

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Committee Reports were included in the AGM package. It was noted that the quality of those reports was very good. There were not questions on the majority of committees

Committees	Committee Chair(s)
Canada Winter Games	Rahim Jessa
Code of Conduct	Jimmy Valliere
Competitions	Jimmy Valliere
Doubles	Gordon Pybus
Junior Development	Simon Bicknell; Soraya Kurji
Officiating	Jimmy Valliere
Volunteer & Recognition	Natasha Doucas
2020 Fund	Andrew Lynn

### ➤ Finance

- Government revenues (viaSport and Gaming) are similar to last year.
- Income Statement: general remarks
  - SQBC revenues were \$377,000 in 2017, of which competition fee revenues (in/out revenue) accounting for approx. \$130,000. SQBC is realistically dealing with \$247,000 in revenues.
  - Auditors were positive about our last fiscal year; re: auditor's report.
  - SQBC currently has \$71,000 in the bank, and these funds must last through the summer until October (i.e. next season, as most revenues are generated in the Sept – Dec period).
    - Reduced bank charges and service fees (around \$800 – 900).
  - Receivables decreased a lot as SportyHQ improved upon the timing of their payments.
  - SQBC does not own a lot of assets and much of our revenue is restricted cash e.g. must be spent in certain areas.
  - New revenue generation plan should help us gain more revenue
    - Most of SQBC's current donations come in the form of restricted funds (mostly for Junior Programs; e.g. the Gudewill Fund or the 2020 Fund), suggesting a need to find ways to generate unrestricted funds so SQBC can do more for our members.
  - New staff model at SQBC is proportional to the increase in wages.
  - More funds were spent on player development, while the Gudewill Fund donation doubles this year to \$10,000 with a challenge to match funds.
  - SQBC is satisfied with the overall performance of auditors Hay & Watson and see no need to change service providers (see Motions).

### ➤ Canada Winter Games Committee (Rahim Jessa)

- 8 Players to be selected for the Canada Winter Games (CWG); 1 alternate spare for each category (in progress)
- A training camp will be hosted in August
- Select tournaments need to be selected at the start of the 2018/19 season for athletes to attend and get results (e.g. Shawnigan, Evergreen, Alberta Jesters).
- Aim to have the team representing British Columbia at CWG selected by November 2018.
  - Athletes selected based on SQBC policies: team selections are based on rankings, head to heads (point difference of 40 or less) and other criteria (i.e. one match play off).
  - CWG provides transportation from all major cities to the Games (Red Deer, AB; e.g. travelling out of YVR for SQBC). Athletes must commit to play to access transportation funds; most cost-effective option would allow athletes to travel from the nearest hub to them, rather than through YVR to save on expenses.

- SQBC needs to work out how many U19 players can be released by schools for play in the post-secondary category. Potential for travel assistance to incentivize athletes to come back to play at the post-secondary level.

## ZONE REPS – UPDATES: AROUND THE PROVINCE

Zone #	Zone	Representative
1	Kootenays	Rebecca Vassilakakis
2	Thompson-Okanagan	Cam Martyna
3	Fraser Valley	Shawn Zwierzchowski
4	Fraser River	Jef Young
5	Vancouver Coastal	Robert Pacey
6a	Vancouver Island – Central Coast	Lee Clackson
6b	Vancouver Island – North Island	Sean Baker
7	North West	Jill Pimlott
8	Cariboo – North East	Leon Terblanche

- Cam Martyna (Zone 2 Rep) reported that the Thompson-Okanagan area is doing well; University is bringing in new prospects in the Thompson-Okanagan area, and that a PSA event was hosted in Kelowna (Zone 2)
- Shawn Zwierzchowski reported no fluctuations from last year but notes the loss of 8 courts in the Fraser Valley. Junior programs in Mission are underway.
- Sean Baker (Zone 6b Rep) reported that memberships are positive, and that people seem to move around the island for work, allowing for new imports for memberships on Vancouver Island.
- Rebecca Vassilakakis reported that a new Squash, Golf and Climbing club is proposed to be built in Revelstoke; plans are going well and moving quickly. A farmer’s market promotion resulted in 6 new kids starting, boosting the local juniors program.
  - Mike (from Trail; who is credited for boosting the local Squash community from 3 players to 40 in the last 10 years) is stepping down from the community recreation centre. Currently, a membership purchase in the community recreation centre includes a squash kit consisting of a racquet and goggles.
  - Castlegar currently has one court and is mostly used by students.
  - Memberships in Nelson is thriving with many of its members happy with playing squash. A junior program is starting (with positive growth projected), with the potential to hold a clinic in the future.
- Benjamin Uliana (Cedar Hill Squash Club) reported that Phil Green retired in May 2018, and that roles are changing at Cedar Hill (Daryl Suen and Tristan Eisler [acquired a work visa] are helping out at the club).
  - Phil is still active in school groups (around 3 days a week, drop ins), and that all programs are full.
  - PNW, Junior Closed (in Nanaimo) and the Canadian Junior Open all had a waitlist, reflecting increased activity within the Junior category.
- Vicky Lust (Shawnigan Lake School; SLS) reported good results from SLS at Nationals. A steady influx of players (juniors) and abundance of coaches (Rob, Mike, Tristan, Vicky) supporting growth of the squash program (including junior drop ins on Sunday). Congratulations to Ryan Picken for making the World Junior Team.
- Markus Wenzel (Salt Spring Squash Club) reported on the outcome of the first squash court, and suggested a need to justify the first court before developing a second court as bookings are not yet consistent.
  - A second court is realistic only with sufficient donor support, which would facilitate more player development programs.
  - Ben was hired to coach clinics, camps, and learn to play squash programs in the junior level (grassroots).
- Jenna Shervan (UVic Squash Club) reported that the club ran 2 tournaments this year (the UVic Open and BC Post-Secondary Championships) with 90 and 30 participants respectively.
  - Most players entering the BC University Championships were from UVic.

- Both the women's and men's team travelled up island and to Vancouver and Calgary for various events.
- Boxed league event engaged most members and some faculty, though the challenge was how to engage non-squash players. Ian Sefton noted that the boxed league approach worked better than a Team night event as scheduled matches were more effective, and that students would not leave after they played their match.
- Jenna ran a Ladies Night in September 2017 that brought in 10 participants, with half of them committing to the club. This event contributed to evening out the gender balance at the UVic Squash Club. Ian Sefton noted that the club was generally 75% men, 25% ladies in the past, and that the club is more gender equal now with stronger females inspiring both guys and girls.
- School programs and racquet sport/squash camps for younger kids (ages 6 – 14 years) will run in the fall/winter of 2018.
- Cathy Brown (Vancouver Lawn Tennis Club; VLT) reported that it will be important to show the broad membership of VLT that the new squash courts are well used with good programming.
  - Viktor Berg was hired as the club's head squash professional.
  - VLT hosted the Canadian National Doubles Championships, and is keen to host more squash tournaments.
- Nancy Thompson reported that 2 new programs will be introduced at The Arbutus Club this summer, led by Ian Woodhead (Head Squash Professional): The International Doubles (on a singles court) and the Racquets 57 (Racquet ball on a squash court).

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION – NEXT 2 YEARS

### 5 Year Strategic Plan Update

- SQBC currently at the 3-year mark, accomplishing approximately 50% of the original expectations while stabilizing the organization as a whole.
- The next 2 years should focus on the key thrusts of (1) Enhanced core programs and services, (2) Organizational sustainability, (3) Member growth and engagement, (4) Marketing & Communications and (5) Revenue Generation.
  - Core Programs and services require more volunteer support to be delivered to the level that the organization has determined. Core programs and services include: general member services, communications, rankings, sanctioned tournaments and events, provincial championships, officiating, coaching, volunteer recognition, sport community engagement, board and committee support, government reporting etc.
- Organizational sustainability involves the change leadership model, advocacy for new courts and reduction of the loss of courts (e.g. how SQBC can support the business case for new courts at UBC), strategic management and financial management
- Membership growth support will require enhancing the value of a SQBC membership for both individual and club members. Membership engagement highlights opportunities for SQBC to interact with its members in local communities:
  - Joint school program with another sport organization to be explored
  - Other ways to support squash leagues such as a squash league committee
  - Potential for a post-secondary committee and doubles program
  - High Performance: Need to recognize that SQBC lacks the financial resources necessary to support this type of program however it is the desire of SQBC to look for creative ways to develop a high performance program with limited funds. Vicky Lust notes that some Shawnigan players are interested in playing full time. And the lack of support is a problem that extends to Squash Canada as well. One creative idea is to utilize the PSA players (past and current) in this province who could help mentor those players wanting to play PSA full time. It would be a good place to start this process (e.g. how to join, how to base yourself, find sponsors etc.). Vicky added that she is keen on volunteering time for the women's calendar, but notes a clash of interests with England Squash.

- Para/Disability and Aboriginal Squash: government funded focuses that poses as new opportunities for SQBC (would like to see some programming in these areas; wheelchair squash is an interesting one to explore). Steve Hawyes in Terrace could help start Aboriginal squash in the north.
- BC Winter Games: engage more junior players and coaches in all zones (an opportunity to look into this for 2022).
- Exploring the opportunity for squash to be part of the BC 55+ Games in Kelowna in 2019.
- Potential transition to Club Locker from SportyHQ needs to be considered.

## ➤ Other Remarks

- Daniel Sokolov who was from Nova Scotia noted that squash people are dog friendly, and that dogsitting at clubs is common in his area. He noted that dogs help create a better atmosphere and contribute to stress relief. This idea is optimal for people dropping in for quick evening games (around 45 minutes) and don't want to pay for doggy daycare (though not ideal for tournaments → suggests the potential for dogs to be a mascot for squash).
- Rachel Au reported that there are a lot of juniors who play, but a gap exists between recreational and serious players, often representing an unequal gender balance (few women, some men). She adds that it is sad to see so many juniors that do not continue playing, noting mounting pressures for a lot of juniors. Perhaps a new category for the "in between" players can help alleviate this situation, making the sport fun to keep the lifeline of squash.
- Rodney Herring reported a growing issue in Victoria where the women's league was discontinued in the previous season. He notes that a lot of women continue to play squash, but are not doing so in league, suggesting a need to encourage women to participate more and be more involved (perhaps pitching the sport as a stress reliever for busy people).
- John Roche added that an article he read quoted the loss of squash players after the junior ranks because "life catches up to you" (i.e. realities of the 20's). In their late 30's, people begin to come back to squash → an effort could be made to retain those folks and get them back to play.
- Jenna Sherven added her personal experience of playing both rugby and squash. She ultimately chose to continue with squash simply because of the differing time commitments required for play: rugby takes hours of practice, while squash is easy (45 minutes only, with courts conveniently located on campus where she lives).

## ➤ **COACHING, OFFICIATING, MEMBERSHIP AND TOURNAMENTS**

### Liana Schou's Presentation (Member Services and Operations Coordinator)

- Identified a need to create various squash programs and services to support Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD). Coaching programs need to be supported at the same time to help move athletes through while bringing the program back to sustainable levels.
  - Daniel Sokolov mentioned that the current coaching accreditation (program) process is unclear. He notes that he's never seen any outreach or marketing regarding coaching, which could be problematic for those who would be interested in joining as they don't know what avenues to approach this idea. Officiating program experiences similar issues (if not bigger) as many officials did not register in the new system.
- Current evaluations of SQBC's membership show membership numbers are consistent in the 2000s. We know there are many people playing squash who are not SQBC members (e.g. only around half of UVic club members are SQBC members). More efforts to track membership in squash facilities in each zone is needed, requiring SQBC staff to work closely with zone reps.
- Going forward, it is imperative for SQBC to realize mechanisms for communication to players (other than mediums we currently have).
- SQBC hosted 44 sanctioned events this year (vs. 40 in 2017). Sean Baker noted that fewer people are entering tournaments despite an increase in sanctioned events hosted. He added that the current tournament schedule is saturated, resulting in people to "shop around" for events rather than travelling to a limited number of tournaments. In addition, Vancouver Island does not have a single doubles court in operation, which probably would keep people in the sport for much longer.

## REVENUE GENERATION AND MARKETING/COMMUNICATION

### Joanne Veltri's Presentation (Business Development Coordinator)

- One of Joanne's roles as the Business Development Coordinator involves helping SQBC build relationships between the squash world and the corporate world. Although there was some direction in marketing/revenue generation in the past, not enough time was devoted towards this area.
- Marketing and Communications (MarCom) should focus on developing marketing that SQBC's members and the corporate sector wants and identifying what SQBC needs to do going forward.
- Evaluating SQBC's current situation, brand management is of utmost importance. 12 different versions of the SQBC logo was used by the organization to represent itself previously, which can be problematic when pitching to potential sponsors. Ensuring we have a continuous look and feel, and continuity in execution throughout all communications/key messaging is important to help us build a presence to increase our membership overall. Also, athlete bios are an important piece to be developed so SQBC has enough information for communications (key for media releases).
- An interdisciplinary approach to put SQBC's presence out there is a good first step (e.g. community engagement activities such as the 2018 summer northern tour with Steve Hawykes and Michael Thompson).
- SWOT analysis conducted highlights the potential marketing and sponsorship opportunities available to SQBC. As sport exists in a competitive market, differentiating SQBC from the other 89 provincial championships is a priority such that squash can be packaged attractively for sponsors and hence adding value to the organization. For example, the fact that dogs frequent squash clubs is an opportunity to be capitalized.
- Current sponsorship goals are to aim high, to ensure that we hit our targets (65% Sponsorship, 20% Giving, 15% Cause Marketing). Securing control over "clean" spaces is important when pitching to potential sponsors. For example, a SQBC TV Media room at a tournament host club could be managed by broadcast communications students, or a Social Media Wall (with livestreamed games) are "clean" and controllable space.
- Cause Marketing approach will focus on philanthropy, grants, donor asks and donor campaigns. Philanthropy based events have proven to be effective in generating revenue where donations at the till can easily generate \$15,000 – 20,000 on one Saturday, especially when an athlete is involved. These events can be done in line with BC Squash Week. Donor campaigns (e.g. Friends of BC Squash) involve tapping into the passion of the sport shared by both members and non-members to create more avenues the organization can work with in the marketplace.
- Rodney Herring pointed out that there are revenue generation opportunities in clubs which are not recognized. In addition, officiating programs are an opportunity for SQBC to generate more revenue. E.g. more people trained to be referees would not only generate more revenue but assist in improving the level of play at tournaments. SQBC should support lower level referees before we can support higher level officiating. Rodney also added that scoreboards on every court are often lacking in Squash.
- Daniel Sokolov mentioned fundraising campaigns conducted at other squash clubs that were effective.
  - Getting prizes from businesses from the local community and selling tickets to members for a chance to win those prizes
  - Prizes placed on a squash court where members could throw a half-cut squash ball and aim for the prize "hoop".
  - Group orders, funny videos online etc.
- Ian Sefton mentioned that his friend produced 30 second – 1 minute videos for the UVic Squash Club post games, and that frequent (once a week) publishing helps the club build awareness.
- Vicky Lust added that many people complain about referees (i.e. not knowing rules etc.), but top players do not want to ref because of the bad reputation associated with refereeing. It is this ironic yet vicious cycle of the sport's culture that affects the sustainability of officiating programs in squash.

**Squash BC Planning Meeting adjourned at 3:57pm.**