

Warwickshire Squash

Committee Reports September 2022



Junior Chairperson – Bhawna Singh

Warwickshire junior squash has seen some very exciting times in the past 12 months since the end of Covid restrictions. We welcomed our new county junior coach Roxy, who has been a junior player herself and has an interest in sport nutrition. Welcome Roxy!! This year has been a steep learning curve for her and myself as we are new to our roles.

We successfully ran two county closed at Leamington squash club one in July 2021 (for the 2020-2021 season) and then another in September 2021 (for 2021-2022 season) entries for both events were close to the 100 mark. Leamington squash club were amazing as the host and catered for all needs. Big thanks to Jason Pike for his immense help with the events and to Asif Chaudry and Roger Moore for stepping in and running the tournament desk.

In Nov 2021 we entered 14 teams from Warwickshire junior squash over 5 different age groups and both girls and boys plus additional 2nd teams in some age groups. We were the county nationally with the highest number of entries. All 14 of our junior teams went through the stage 1 to play in the final stage, some in the plate event.

In January the finals for the intercounty took place in Nottingham. Nine of our teams were in the main draw with four in the plate event. Our juniors played exceptionally well with two teams taking the 1st position (U11 girls and U13 boys - the boys won this in the final match against Yorkshire who have been champions for the past 10 years plus) two teams also took the silver position and one came third.

In May this year we saw 8 of our juniors representing their country. This is a great achievement for Warwickshire junior squash- again the highest number from any region. These youngsters are inspirational for all of our juniors that want to make further progress in squash.

Lastly the Warwickshire junior squash stars program has been a huge success with 180 new juniors being introduced to squash!!

League Secretary – Roger More

COVID hit our sport hard, harder than many others, and we have successfully held a winter and summer league since.

We are all set for another winter league, starting in October but I must raise a few issues that need addressing, some of which I have raised before. We need clubs to help with basic administration duties and all players to ensure that our sport is played in the correct spirit. The league rules do not make easy or enjoyable reading so I shall be adding a word document on the league site which highlights the basic duties expected of clubs and players. This hopefully will also reduce the administrative burden on the league secretary plus the Warwickshire Committee.

There have been some unsavoury incidents in recent seasons and we need all clubs and players to realise their important part in making our sport played in a competitive but fair spirit. After all we are custodians of our sport.

I have received several complaints of markers not applying the correct procedure when players use abusive language or show disrespect to their opponent. We have a growing number of juniors playing in our senior league and whilst they may be capable of competing against a senior player, we do have to remember our duty of care plus showing them the way our sport should be played. We need to stamp out poor behaviour and it's within the league rules to suspend serial offenders. This applies to players of all ages and any sex.

We need team captains to support this initiative and to remind players that they are representing their club and ensure games are marked correctly.

There's been reports of several players under 19 not wearing eye protection, and a proposal received as to how this can be enforced will be voted on.

Wolverhampton have sent a complaint about their 2nd team not being promoted, which is primarily because Stourbridge have entered a team. I shall explain the normal process of how the league divisions are structured and allow Wolverhampton to respond.

Liaison Officer – Chris Hall

Warwickshire Squash Stars

This has proven a great success with 180 new juniors introduced to squash through the scheme within Warwickshire. For £30 the junior receives:

- Junior Racket
- Protective Eyewear
- Squash Stars Shirt
- Ball
- Drawstring Bag
- 4 Free Group Lessons

Current active clubs include Edgbaston Priory, Kenilworth, Leamington, Solihull Arden, Stratford, Sutton Coldfield, Warwick Boat Club, West Warwick's.

If any other clubs would like to join, please contact Chris on 07961106291 or at hally_71@hotmail.com.

Funding

We have had an application of funding approved from England Squash to fund inclusion and diversity initiatives. Warwickshire Squash will also contribute towards this meaning there is a total of £2000 available to clubs. There will be 10 grants available of up to £200 towards programmes which aim to target one of the following groups:

- Age
- Disability
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy
- Race and ethnicity
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Sex
- Gender
- Hard to reach communities

Applications by email to Chris Hall (hally_71@hotmail.com) or get in touch for any questions.

Club Survey

We will shortly be sending out a survey to clubs to ensure we have up to date contact details for various roles such as chairperson, coach, etc. It will also include a few questions to help us get feedback on how best Warwickshire Squash can support our clubs.

Communication

We are lucky to have a large number of clubs and coaches who are doing some very good work. If there is anything your club would like advice on, please get in touch and we can point you in the direction of clubs with experience in this area. For our coaches we have a Whatsapp group which has proven effective at sharing ideas and information. If anyone would like to be added to this, please contact Chris on 07961106291.

Calendar of Events

We would appreciate if you could take away a calendar of events to display at your club.

Men's Captain – Sam Miller

Having finished 4th and 3rd respectively in the last two championships before Covid struck, the men's side were looking to go further this time and were able to call on a strong squad for the event.

The tie against Devon was first up, the opposition missing a couple of their regular players to give us a slight edge before the match. Jason Pike and Sam Miller were up first, both putting in professional performances to gain straight game wins with neither seriously troubled. Abd-Allah Eissa had a potentially tricky tie against former England junior international Jim Bristow. Bristow punishing any junior play from Eissa, forcing the youngster to play a more mature game to come through in 4 games. Once Jordan Hardwick had made his way to the club via a detour to Nottingham University, he was looking very sharp to gain a quick-fire 3-0 win. Last on was Chris Hall against the talented Mike Harris, Harris taking a tight first game before running away with the second. Hall finding some form in the third and fourth but the Devon stalwart took the match 3-1.

Sussex had edged Northumbria 3-2 in their first match meaning the Southern side would be our opposition in the semi-finals. Pike getting the side off to the best possible start with another controlled showing, whilst Eissa put in another excellent effort to take out fellow England ranked youngster George Porter 3-0. The Kenilworth players efforts even more impressive given he was fasting during the event. Hardwick again showed his growing maturity to get through in straight games against a very good player in Lucas Hughes. Hall came up against an inspired Ollie Pett who put on a clinical display and didn't let the Sutton Coldfield coach into the match. Last match on was Sam Miller who looked out of sorts against the very athletic Noah Meredith, the Sussex player winning through. However, the early work done by our 3,4 and 5 string enough to take us to the final!

Two wins on the Saturday meant the men were through to the final, with a gentle warning from captain Miller not to enjoy the evening too much. Despite toiletgate, shoegate and kebabgate, everyone was looking in decent shape on the Sunday to take on an exceptionally strong Yorkshire side. However, we were bolstered by additions at the top of the order of Miles Jenkins and Elliott Morris.

First match on were the number 3 strings, Hall taking on his old junior counterpart Chris Simpson who had gone onto an impressive senior career. A high-quality match with Hall perhaps playing his best squash of the weekend but Simpson just having the edge in each game to give Yorkshire the lead. Jenkins and Hardwick were on next with Hardwick again very focused to beat a slightly worse for wear Ben Sockett 3-0. Jenkins played against the hugely talented Sam Todd, with the Warwickshire man looking slightly tired from his PSA event which finished just the day before, Todd taking this one in 3. Morris was playing

training partner Stuart Macgregor and these two put on a more relaxed showing with some exhibition style squash, Morris keeping his nose in front throughout. With the match poised at 2-2, Miller came up against full time professional Joel Arscott in a match which looked like it could be a cracker. Miller rolled back the years with his best squash of the weekend, soaking up anything the Arscott could throw at him before countering with some stunning winners to take a 3-0 win and giving Warwickshire men their first county championship title in recent memory.

Warwickshire Squad – Miles Jenkins, Elliott Morris, Chris Hall, Sam Miller, Abd-Allah Eissa, Jordan Hardwick, Jason Pike

1st Round: 4-1 win vs Devon

Semi Final: 3-2 win vs Sussex

Final: 3-2 win vs Yorkshire

Ladies Captain – Leonie Holt

The Warwickshire Ladies Team travelled to Nottingham to play in the senior inter-county finals. The team consisted of Jenny McKenna (Kenilworth) Olivia Gow (Kenilworth) Lucy Green (Birmingham University) Laura Helm (Leamington) and Jess Watson (Leamington).

In the first match Warwickshire faced Essex and won 5-0. Jess, Laura and Jenny all won 3-0 controlling the ball around the court nicely and hitting some very accurate shots to the back of the court, causing problems for their opponents. Lucy went 2-0 up in her rubber, with a comeback from her opponent to tie at 2-2. Lucy regained the momentum to take a convincing 11-5 win.

Olivia faced junior Lara Newton. This was a very even match with Olivia managing to sneak the first two games, Lara fought back to 2-2, Olivia managed to secure the victory with an 11-4 win.

In the Second Rubber, Warwickshire faced Gloucestershire and lost 4-1. A strong 3-0 win for Jess, whilst Olivia and Lucy went down in three very close games, which could have gone either way. Laura also going down in 4 in a nail biting match. Jenny McKenna had a tough task losing in 3 to Julianne Courtice world ranked 55, but put on a spirited display.

On Sunday the team faced Cheshire in the 3/4th playoff. Jess kept up her form winning convincingly 3-0, despite some close and competitive matches the team went down 4-1. Especially Laura going down 12-10 in the fifth.

A thoroughly enjoyable weekend for everyone involved!

Warwickshire Squad - Jenny Mckenna, Olivia Gow, Lucy Green, Laura Helm, Jess Whatson

Round 1: 5-0 win vs Essex

Semi-Final: 1-4 loss vs Gloucestershire

3/4 Play-off: 1-4 loss vs Cheshire

Masters Captain – Andy Murray

Inter County

Over 35 men made it to final weekend and won.

Over 45 men made it to final weekend which was ruined by a drop out by another county.

Came 6th Over 55 narrowly missed out making final weekend and didn't play last consolation weekend due to other county drop outs.

Over 65 made it to final weekend and came 5th

Ladies 40 made it to final weekend and came fourth even though several injuries made them weaker than hoped.

Ladies 50 ended up playing just one team, a strong Yorkshire team and lost. Ironically Yorkshire dropped out of final weekend being held in Sheffield. They came third in final consolation weekend.

Thanks to our captains.

35 Jason Pike, 45 Andy Murray, 55 Nigel Clemmett, 65 Roger More.

Ladies 40 Natalie Townsend, 50 Lucy Emsden.

County Closed

Very well run by Leamington and Mo.

However a very poor turnout of numbers in the masters section overall. Need to try and improve entry levels.

Masters Individual Squash

Good entries from many Warwickshire players in the England Squash Masters Region events.

Masters Home Internationals

Well done to Jason Pike gaining his 1st cap in the over 35 team, to Geoff Redfern playing in the over 65, and Andy Murray in the over 50, also captaining England for his 2nd time.

Racketball Captain – Chris Hall

Warwickshire Racketball won the National title at the inter county championships held at Nottingham Squash Rackets Club in June. Victories in the group stage against Leicestershire, Dorset and Shropshire set up a final against defending champions Devon. Despite Miles Jenkins going down 3-1 to nation champion Mike Harris in an 80-minute tussle, the rest of the team were able to claim victories to take them to the title. Congratulations to the whole team!

Miles Jenkins – Edgbaston Priory and Wolverhampton

Guy Pearson – Kenilworth

Chris Hall – Sutton Coldfield

Jason Pike – Leamington

Jordan Hardwick – Edgbaston Priory

Robbie Fortune – Leamington