

# **European Squash Annual Report 2021**

# 2021 Overview

- In line with the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act, ESF successfully ran a virtual AGM using an online platform, after initially adjourning the meeting.
- At the virtual AGM, 29 Member Nations were represented. ESF has 46 Member Nations.
- There was one Vice Presidents position for which there were 2 nominations that were correctly submitted; the AGM Luis Ferreira (POR) as Vice-President.
- The three amendments to the Memorandum of Association; to include hybrid meetings; to separate the timeline between dispatching the AGM notice (120 days prior); clarification of the Bodies of Appeal were passed.
- The ESF Board from May 2021 comprises President Hugo Hannes (BEL) and Vice-Presidents Rosie Barry (IRE), Jim Hay (SCO), Luis Ferreira (POR) and Thomas Troedsson (SWE), supported by Peter Derrick (ESF Treasurer and Company Secretary).
- Claire Leech was the ESF Office Manager (until May 2021) and Joanne Collins is the Office Administrator. In October Marcel Borst is appointed as ESF Operations Manager.

# 2021 General

- COVID-19 has affected squash in Europe since mid-March 2020. In most countries, venues were closed with a few exceptions (Sweden). Restrictions for play started to lift from permitted in many countries because of the second and third wave of COVID-19. This means that many countries were unable to organise their individual and team championships in 2020 and 2021.
- The cancellation of all 2021 ESF tournaments and most of the circuit events has produced frustration for all parties involved (ESF, MNFs, hosts, clubs etc.), not to mention the financial impact. The desire to get back to some 'normality' is strong however the uncertainty and the introduction of further restrictions in different countries was reality.
- The third wave of COVID-19 is now decreasing. All efforts are aimed at a restart of the ESF Championships and the Junior & Masters circuit at the beginning of 2022.
- Travelling within Europe continued to severely limited the chance of any international competition, and requires testing and quarantine in most cases at the start of 2022.

# Portfolios

- Championships and Masters Committee: Thomas Troedsson
- Junior Committee: Rosie Barry
- Marketing & Communication Committee: Luis Ferreira
- Referees & Coaching Committee: Jim Hay
- Treasurer and Company Secretary : Peter Derrick

# 2021 Administration

- Since July 2020 to date, online Board meetings are held monthly. We intend to keep this up until April 2022. All contact between the Board members and the staff is made by email and telephone. The Board and the Committees are comfortable with virtual meetings which means less travel costs. However, they will never replace physical meetings.
- The office staff continued working remotely. Claire Leech resigned in the spring of 2021. After a thorough and carefully executed selection process the Board appointed Marcel Borst in a new role as the ESF Operations Manager. Although Marcel is based in the Netherlands, he can operate as if he were in the UK office. Using technology, we are creating a virtual office with which we want to increase contact with MNFs.
- The office space at the Solihull Arden Club is reduced to a storage cabinet. Both office staff will continue to work remotely.

# 2021 Championships

- All ESF Championships were cancelled in 2021. All these events were rescheduled for 2022 and new arrangements were made with the organizing host/MNFs.
- Ultimately, we also had to cancel all ESF circuit events for Juniors and Masters. Ranking position of all players were already frozen since 2020. Due to the limitations on travel and different kind of national restrictions and testing protocols, cancellation was the only option.
- The health and safety of the players remain our primary concern.
- For 2022 we are cautiously positive as nations open up and lift restrictions. ESF Championship planning 2022 show a full calendar.

# 2021 Junior Circuit Events

## Junior Committee

- The Committee consists of Jackie Robinson (Director), Michael Gaede (Director of Seeding), Pascal Bruhin, Kim Hannes, David McAlpine, Oliver Pettke, Eoin Ryan and Rosie Barry (Chair)
- Whilst the annual meeting of the Junior Committee has not been possible in either March 2020 or March 2021 there has been regular contact by email and MNFs informed of any decisions.
- All scheduled events for 2021 were cancelled due to COVID 19 restrictions. The Junior Circuit will restart in January 2022 but the decision to organize lies with the hosting nation and depends on current circumstances.
- The junior ranking will be restarted in January 2022.

# 2021 Coaching

Despite the pandemic, it was possible to hold several coaching courses through 2021/2022 at various locations throughout Europe.

These comprised:

- Level 1 Course in Tallinn, Estonia 19th – 22nd August 2021 – 11 persons qualified
- Level 1 Course Bucharest, Romania 9th – 12th September 2021 – 6 persons qualified
- Level 1 Course Moscow, Russia 30th Sept – 3rd October 2021 – 13 persons qualified
- Level 1 Course Porto, Portugal 14th-17th October 2021 – 15 persons qualified
- Level 1 Course in Vienna, Austria 15th-17th October 2021 – 8 persons qualified
- Level 2 Course in Budapest, Hungary 21st – 24th October 2021 – 7 persons qualified
- Level 1 Course Stockholm, Sweden 22nd – 24th October 2021 – 2 persons qualified
- Level 3 Course in Langnau, Switzerland 15th – 21st November 2021 - 11 persons qualified
- Level 1 Course Amsterdam, Netherlands 18th – 21st November 2021 – 14 persons qualified

# 2021 Coaching

- This meant a total of
  - seven Level 1 Courses, with 69 persons qualifying
  - one Level 2 Course with 7 persons qualifying
  - one Level 3 Course with 11 persons qualifying
- Planned Courses:
  - Level 2 Course in Amsterdam, Netherlands 30th June to 3rd July 2022
  - Level 1 Course to be confirmed but possibly Vienna, Austria in 2022

Thanks are given to Michael Khan for organising/tutoring and to the other tutors Colin White, Michael Mueller, Renato Gallego, Csaba Altvater, David McAlpine, Alex Kramer and Arnis Tihvinskis.

It is also hoped that a Coaching Conference can be convened at some point during 2022.

# 2021 Refereeing

- The ESF Refereeing Committee comprises Jim Hay (Chairman), Tomas Forter (Director), Roy Gingell, John Massarella, Marko Podgorsek and Marc Palmieri.
- The launch of the WSO platform has proven to be very popular and already 10 members of ESF have signed up to the programme, with at least another 3 poised to join in the very near future. There were 788 referees signed up at the last count and this continues to increase.
- The Chair of the Referee Committee will be working with VP Luis Ferreira (Marketing) to try and bring more members on board.
- It is hoped that a Referees Conference can be organised for later this year (2022)

# 2021 Finance

- Sadly another year of COVID has once again forced the cancellation and postponement of planned events. Despite this the outturn for the financial year 2021 was an underlying surplus of €9,950 some €8,000 more than the budget plan.
- Because of the relationship between Events and Officer and Committee activity the loss of income from Levies, Entry Fees, SPIN/ESID and Coaching of €56,000 was largely offset by reductions in expenditure on Travel, Committee work and Tournament support (€54,000).
- The surplus arises from two main sources; a reduction in salary costs because of the Office Manager vacancy for part of the year (€7,500) and a net saving of Office Overheads (€3,000) as a result of moving to a virtual office mode of working.
- The actual accounting result for the year is a deficit of €13,302 caused by the strengthening of Sterling against the Euro during the year. At year end the revaluation of cash together with in-year currency transactions produced an Exchange Rate loss of over €23,000. It is important to remember that this is an unrealised loss not an actual cost.
- The overall financial position of ESF remains sound with Capital Fund of €138,744 and an accumulated reserve of €186,146.  
No payments were made from the Capital Fund during the year.

# Future

- There is a need to keep people in the sport, since some clubs are struggling and individuals may have been tempted away to other sports that they can play (tennis, golf, pádel, etc.).
- Concern for venue owners, as more than 90% of our courts and venues are privately run. WSF, ESF and the national federations have no impact on these venues however we need their infrastructure to play our sport.
- ESF gathered information from MNFs via Online One 2 One Zoom meetings in 2021 and will continue in 2022.
- Today almost every Government in Europe makes an end to most Covid-19 restrictions.
- Meanwhile we have to face totally different challenges.
- How to restart squash is the question for one, for others the question is how do I survive.
- Championships and circuit events will suffer from global uncertainty and increased travel costs.
- The pandemic have had various impact on government funding for MNFs, where some are faced with significantly reduced funding.
- Today is a new beginning to bring squash back to the level as it was or even better, more sustainable.

# Summary

To conclude :

- The ESF Board regrets that we had too many Board meetings in which we discussed items not directly related to Squash but important enough to have effect on Squash. The effect does not only affect sport and the ESF organization, but also affects the ESF Member Nations and their individual players. ESF will do what is in their power to be supportive.
- With the start of Championships and tournaments across the world a balanced world calendar seems to be logic and more important than ever. We hope that our efforts to achieve the desired result in close consultation with all parties be finalized constructive in 2022.
- We are committed to promoting peace and unity through sport and stand in solidarity with our members of the international sporting community. We very much regret that squash cannot be played everywhere under the same civil circumstances as in most European countries. We hope that we can go back to 'normal' as soon as possible, because international meetings, courses, championships and tournaments have a social value. Bringing people together is in our nature ...

***“Bringing people together is in our nature”***