

OCEANIA SQUASH FEDERATION
SEVENTH GENERAL MEETING
SUVA, FIJI
JUNE, 2003

OFFICERS' REPORT

I have pleasure in presenting this report from the Officers of the Oceania Squash Federation for the period from December 2001 when the Federation last held its General Meeting in Norfolk Island at the time of the South Pacific Mini Games.

The following Officers of the Federation were elected at the Norfolk Island meeting.

Col Clapper (Australia)	President & Executive Director
Gary Robertson (Norfolk Island)	Vice President
Sandie Davis (Australia)	Vice President
Butch Gifford (New Zealand)	Vice President
Bernard Esquedin (New Caledonia)	Vice President
Bernadette Raffe (Cook Islands)	Vice President
Esther Williams (Fiji) was also elected to a Vice President position, by appointment, with the 2003 Oceania Championships being held in Fiji under the umbrella of the Twelfth South Pacific Games.	
Michael Davis (Australia)	Finance Director
Neven Barbour (New Zealand)	Oceania Regional Vice President to the WSF

The following Convenors to various Federation committees were also appointed at the meeting:

Butch Gifford	OSF Coaching & Development Committee
Neven Barbour	OSF Major Games Committee
Greg Hutchings	OSF Championships Committee
Chris Sinclair	OSF Rules & Referees Committee
Mike Greig	OSF Technical Committee
Susan Devoy	OSF Disciplinary Committee

To all the Officers and Committee Convenors, sincere appreciation is extended for their work and support of Federation activities, and their dedication to furthering the development of our sport in the Oceania region.

Membership of the region again remained stable with 8 full members, as follows:

Australia	New Zealand
Cook Islands	Norfolk Island
Fiji	Papua New Guinea
New Caledonia	Samoa

Efforts have continued to attract more members to join the Federation, in particular Tahiti and Vanuatu where court facilities already exist but no formal organizational structure is in place. It is important that the Federation continues its efforts to get the sport operational in these countries, while addressing the more complex issue of expanding

the sport into areas where no court facilities exist. Only with support from Governments will this be achieved due to the high cost of construction and risk for private developers.

The members of the Federation must be commended for their ongoing commitment to the Federation and support of regional development for our sport. There are enormous pressures on our sport to survive and develop in a very competitive environment, especially against the high profile and more affluent sports. To compete effectively, there is a need for countries in the region to work cooperatively, share experiences and encourage each other to develop squash in their country. We have a great product but it needs promoting effectively.

These issues were highlighted at the OSF Strategic Planning Seminar/Workshop held in February 2003 in Auckland, New Zealand. All 8 member countries were represented at the conference, and provided valuable input into identifying issues and forming strategies that could be implemented in each country. The conference was designed to assist each country develop or enhance their own strategic plans, and provide a framework for the region for the next 5-10 years. A task of the incoming Committee will be to finalise a Strategic Plan for the Federation, which is consistent with World Squash Federation objectives and enhances the objectives of our member countries.

The Seminar/Workshop would not have been possible without the financial support provided by the World Squash Federation and International Olympic Committee. We thank them most sincerely.

I also express sincere thanks to Chris Sinclair, Butch Gifford and Jeffrey Wollstein for assisting me in organizing and facilitating the seminar/workshop, to Susie Simcock and Peter Fergusson for their presentations, and to all the delegates for their participation and involvement in a most productive and rewarding event for squash in the region.

A milestone for our sport was achieved in Norfolk with squash being included as a participant sport in the South Pacific Mini Games. Our sport was well received by the public and was a very successful competition. Gary Robertson's efforts in organizational arrangements must not pass without recognition.

We now await with excitement the participation of squash in the much larger South Pacific Games, and commend Esther Williams and Squash Fiji for their efforts in supporting the Games Organisers.

The practice of the Oceania Squash Championships being linked under the umbrella of the South Pacific Mini Games and South Pacific Games should continue, as it provides a wide exposure for our sport throughout the region and links it directly to the wider sporting environment, enhancing the argument for its inclusion in the Olympics.

Masters Squash maintains strong support in the region. After the problems of 2001, the Ninth Oceania Masters was hosted by Norfolk Island in 2002, and was an outstanding success.

There is a great opportunity for our sport to develop a better coordinated Masters programmes for the entire region, particularly embracing Masters activities in Australia and New Zealand with activities of our smaller member countries.

Junior Development is still a major problem for the region, with effective programmes a challenge for all countries. Progress is being made in many areas, however, we must

recognize that it is an ongoing task with which we must persist if the sport is to have a long term future. A major challenge for the incoming committee and member countries will be junior development, including the re-introduction of effective Oceania Junior Championship events.

The OSF has actively promoted development programmes, with particular emphasis over the last two years on refereeing. The OSF purchased from Squash Australia coaching development and refereeing material and promoted its use throughout the region as a recommended standard for the region. The Federation has also assisted in facilitating the engagement of coaches to work in other countries in the region. This role should be expanded to ensure the best and most suitable coaches are available to serve the needs of each member country.

Chris Sinclair has been extremely active in promoting the awareness of refereeing, and facilitating initiatives to encourage and train players to improve their refereeing skills. There is still a great deal of work to do in this area, which the incoming committee will need to address with the support of each country.

Special recognition must go to Chris, Butch Gifford and Jeffrey Wollstein for their work in the refereeing, coaching and development areas which have consumed a considerable amount of their time and effort.

While growth of the sport is relatively stable in most countries, or is growing slightly, Australia appears to still be facing difficult times as it is subjected to immense competition from other sports, changing work patterns and social environments. The high cost of facilities construction also presents a challenge for the sport. There are positive signs in New Zealand for Squash and all can learn from their experiences.

A strong Australia and New Zealand are extremely important for squash in the Oceania region, and we wish them well in meeting the challenges that lie ahead.

We can be very proud of the elite players from our region, many of whom have performed admirably and gained world wide recognition in our sport. Special mention must be made of Sarah Fitzgerald. Record five times world champion, Sarah in 2003 another milestone when she was awarded the "Female Athlete of the Year" award for the second successive year at the Sport Industry Australia Sports Awards held in Melbourne, Australia. Sarah has been a wonderful ambassador for our sport and well deserving of the award.

Carol Owens of New Zealand is also establishing her credentials at the top in world women's events, while a number of our male athletes, notably Australians, are making a mark in PSA events.

The Federation has maintained a close working relationship with its principle body, the World Squash Federation, and has received tremendous support from the WSF Officers and Secretariat. We were particularly proud to have had Susie Simcock, as WSF President, and from our region attend major OSF events, and to have done an excellent job while she was in the presidency. Congratulations are also extended to Neven Barbour for his recent election to a WSF Vice President position.

The Federation's financial position continues to be relatively sound, although its funding base is extremely limited and severely restricts the amount of activity it can undertake in the region.

A number of initiatives were identified at the Strategic Planning Seminar/Workshop which delegates placed high on the list for the Federation to undertake. To progress these will require additional funding which is beyond the capabilities of the Federation's funding resources, which at present is almost exclusively from member country contributions. Under current conditions, it is not viable to increase significantly member contributions.

Special appreciation is again extended to Australia and New Zealand for providing the bulk of funding to the Federation.

The financial accounts of the Federation for the period from 1 July 2001 to 31 May 2003 have been duly audited for presentation at the meeting. Sincere appreciation is extended to our honorary auditor, Peter Hurwood F.C.A. for undertaking the audit.

My sincere thanks go to all those who have supported and assisted me over the last two years, particularly the Vice Presidents and Committee Convenors. I must also record the enormous secretarial assistance and support provided by my wife, Lorel, who also has volunteered her services in an honorary capacity in the interests of the Federation, and without whose support I could not have fulfilled the dual position to the extent required.

And finally, it has again been a pleasure to undertake the dual role of President and Executive Director of the Federation, have the opportunity to present this report on behalf of the Officers, and to be part of the achievements that have been made for our great sport in the Oceania region over the past two years.

Col Clapper
President &
Executive Director
June, 2003