

OCEANIA SQUASH FEDERATION
(OSF)



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Report to the World Squash Federation Annual General Meeting 2005

The development of squash continues to proceed at a steady pace in the Oceania Region, despite the many challenges it faces from numerous other sports in our "sports crazy" region, and the difficult demographics of our region.

The OSF has been encouraged by a number of initiatives occurring in the region, which should provide long term benefits for the region generally.

Significant items of interest for the region are summarised as follows:

1. The number of full member nations remains unchanged at 8, while efforts continue to focus on getting the game established in non – member countries, particularly those that have some form of squash facilities.
2. Following the success of last year's Inaugural Oceania Men's Open Championship which was held in conjunction with the 2004 Squash International and PNG Open in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, the Second Oceania Men's Open Championship took place as part of the "2005 Steel Industries Squash International" – once again in Port Moresby. This year's event attracted increased sponsorship and public attention. Crowds continued to flock to the event which was officially opened by the Governor-General of Papua New Guinea, His Excellency Sir Paulias Matane. Local championships were held alongside the international and saw a record 192 entries from around PNG and northern Australia.
3. The Squash International has provided a wave of popularity for the sport in PNG, with large increases in numbers of competitive players and revival of regional competitions. Funds from the Squash International are being directed towards junior squash which continues to grow in PNG.
4. The 7th Oceania Championships, a major event within the region, is held every 2 years, either separately or under the umbrella of the South Pacific Games and South Pacific Mini Games. The Championships continue to form a vital part of development for the smaller emerging countries in the region. Player representation from each country has been increased to provide for the introduction of doubles squash in future Oceania Championships.
5. The Samoa Squash Rackets Association continues to work closely with the Organising Committee for the XIIIth South Pacific Games (now named the "Pacific Games") to be held in Apia, Samoa in 2007. The Government of Samoa, through the Games Authority have commenced construction of facilities to house Basketball, Volleyball, Badminton and Squash. The Squash facility will boast three singles and the first ever doubles court in Samoa, including spectators' gallery. This will be a huge boost for the sport in Samoa, and a great facility to showcase the sport at the 2007 Games.
6. The major focus for Australia has been preparing for the 2006 Commonwealth Games, which will be held in Melbourne, Australia from 16-26 March, 2006. The event will attract athletes, officials and spectators from throughout the Commonwealth, and generate massive exposure for Squash on which the region hopes to capitalise.
7. While PNG hosts the richest PSA prize money event in the region, Australia and New Zealand continue to host an array of lower prize money PSA and WISPA events. Hopefully, with increased financial backing, more events and increased prize money will attract a larger contingent of leading players to the Oceania region on a regular basis.

8. The 2011 Pacific Games will be held in Noumea, New Caledonia, and the OSF will work closely with the Ligue Caledonienne De Squash to ensure that Squash features prominently in the Games programme.
9. Cook Islands has been selected to host the 2009 Pacific Mini Games, and the OSF is working with the Cook Islands Squash Association to cement a place for Squash in the Mini Games.
10. General Meetings of the Oceania Federation are currently held bi-annually with the Eighth General Meeting in Rarotonga in October 2005. However, as the OSF is moving towards registering as a company to provide, among other things, protection for its members and the sport, general meetings and reporting on an annual basis will need to be introduced.
11. Masters Squash, particularly in Australia and New Zealand, continues to attract large participation. The 12th Oceania Masters Championship was held recently in Melbourne, Australia and attracted 150 entrants. The Oceania Masters Championship is held on an annual basis.
12. Two coaches from the Oceania region attended the WSF Coaching Conference in Malmo. The OSF is extremely grateful to the WSF for nominating one of the attendees for financial support to attend the Conference, and applaud the concept.
13. The first batch of Australian Coaches have been qualified as Level 3 coaches from the inaugural course that was commenced in 2004.
14. Squash Australia has introduced a new system for its elite junior athlete squad. These squads travelled to New Zealand, Malaysia, North America and the United Kingdom to compete in Junior Open tournaments to give the athletes overseas experience and the opportunity to compete against top players.
15. Elite players from the Oceania region continue to make an impact on the world scene, with 8 men and 10 ladies placed in the top 60 PSA/WISPA rankings respectively. Most prominent are Rachael and Natalie Grinham at Nos. 1 and 4 in the ladies rankings, and David Palmer at No. 3 in the men's rankings.
16. New Zealand has been focusing on continued benchmarking of Squash administration throughout the country, which has resulted in a standardised accounting package and coding system being adopted nationally.
17. The OSF has been working over the last twelve months to develop its website. The site is now operational (<http://oceaniasquash.biz/>). Limited funding has impacted on the development timeframe.
18. Squash New Zealand has undertaken the development and launch of a new website, and fully funded the engagement of two new resources – District Development Manager and Coach Development Manager, while research projects in conjunction with Squash New Zealand's education partner (Unitec) have been completed on a range of issues, including:
 - Why people play squash
 - Funding channels and options
 - Elite player movement.
19. Fiji Squash has adopted a rebuilding philosophy with its major concentration on junior development and schools programmes, targeting towards the 2007 Pacific Games.

20. Squash continues to grow in New Caledonia with increasing numbers playing the sport, particularly junior players.
21. The Squash Ball agreement between the OSF and Dunlop is providing the developing countries with much needed squash balls – particularly for junior development. As Australia and New Zealand have independent ball arrangements in place, their allocations were re-distributed to the developing countries and greatly appreciated.
22. A great deal of activity has been undertaken to assist member countries gain greater knowledge of the rules and refereeing of the game. Chris Sinclair, Convenor of the OSF Rules & Referees Committee, has presented theoretical and on-court clinics and produced Rules and Refereeing Newsletters. A register of accredited referees has also been established for the region. A number of on-going initiatives is being planned to further enhance the standard of refereeing and knowledge of the rules of squash throughout the region, including doubles squash.
23. A register of coaches profile has been developed for the region, and will be accessible through the OSF website.
24. The OSF Coaching Committee has been extremely active, particularly through the expertise of Jeff Wollstein, in developing coaching “packages” and other resources that can be used by the smaller island countries. These are designed to provide long-term benefits to the region.
25. WSF assistance has helped enormously over the last twelve months towards our objectives of improving the standard of refereeing and knowledge of the rules throughout the region.
26. Norfolk Island has seen a huge growth in squash, following the appointment of a full time Level 2 coach on the island. The impact has been quite dramatic for this country of just on 2,000 residents, where squash is now recognised as a significant aspect of life on Norfolk.
27. Squash New Zealand is preparing for the next World Junior Squash Championships in 2006 while Australia will be hosting the World Deaf Squash Championships in Melbourne in 2005.

The Oceania Federation continues to work closely with its member countries to foster and develop our great sport in the Pacific region, and to support the WSF in promoting and furthering its objectives for the sport.

Finally, the WSF Management Committee together with all who contributed towards the Olympic bid, should be congratulated for the enormous effort put into what started as a dream, and almost turned into reality. We must not give up hope that the day will come.

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