



OCEANIA SQUASH FEDERATION
"OSF"

Report to the World Squash Federation's 2006 Annual General Meeting

Federation Address:
23 Kinsella Street
Belmont Heights Qld 4153
Phone: (61) 7 33906694
Mobile: (61) 0417639364
clapperc@powerup.com.au

The sport of Squash continues to battle for its "slice of the sporting pie" in the highly competitive market that embraces the Oceania region.

Oceania has a small population base compared to other regions within the WSF framework. Furthermore, it is spread over a vast and economically and culturally diverse area of the Pacific basin, which in turn creates unique challenges for the OSF and its member countries.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the region continues to perform above its weight within the Squash world, especially at the elite player level and its contribution to World Squash in the areas of coaching development, refereeing development and administration.

Highlights of events and activities that have taken place over the last twelve months, together with events planned for the future, include those summarised below.

1. The number of full member nations affiliated with the OSF remains at 8. The OSF continues to support and fund a number of other countries as associate members, in recognition of their potential for future development.
2. The 2006 Commonwealth Games took place in Melbourne, Australia in March, 2006. Squash was one of the competition sports. It was extremely popular and attracted large spectator interest at the Squash venue, in addition to above average television ratings. A total of 2,000 seats surrounded the Centre court, with the majority of the 1,500 seats available to the public being sold out over the 10 singles sessions and 9 doubles sessions of play.

A wide representation of players from Commonwealth Countries contested the various medals, which included Men's and Ladies Singles, in addition to Men's, Ladies and Mixed Doubles events. Players from 28 countries competed in the various events (Men's Singles - 53 entries, Ladies Singles - 30 entries, Men's Doubles - 21 pairs, Ladies Doubles - 10 pairs, and Mixed Doubles - 21 pairs).

It was particularly pleasing to see that a number of the smaller developing countries in the Oceania region take advantage of the Games being held in the region. Other than Australia and New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Norfolk Island fielded players in the Squash events.

Organisers of the Squash segment are to be congratulated for staging a highly successful event.

The challenge for our sport is to harness the success of the Commonwealth Games to further the development of Squash, before it becomes a fading memory.

3. Melbourne, Australia also hosted the World Doubles Championships. Although this did not have anything like the same impact or coverage as the Commonwealth Games, it was a good dress rehearsal for the Games, especially for the Melbourne Squash facilities that had undergone major modification work to cater for Doubles play.

4. From the experience of the World Doubles and Commonwealth Games, it is evident that a number of aspects of the doubles game needs to be reviewed to perfect the game for our elite players.

5. The Oceania Squash Championships are held on a biennial basis and is contested among countries eligible to compete in the Pacific Games and Pacific Mini Games – which precludes Australia and New Zealand from competing. This is a major event on the OSF Calendar.

The Seventh Oceania Championships took place in Rarotonga and was hosted by the Cook Islands Squash Association, who is to be congratulated for staging a well organised and super friendly event.

Six countries competed in the Championships.

In addition to the individual men's and ladies events, and men's and ladies teams events, doubles squash was held for education and demonstration purposes.

The Cook Islands Open immediately followed the conclusion of the Oceania Championships.

6. The XIIIth South Pacific Games is to be held in Apia, Samoa in September 2007 and planning is well advanced for the Games. Squash is included in the Games programme, with a new squash facility due for completion in early 2007 to cater for the following events:

Men's and Ladies Singles
Men's and Ladies Teams
Men's, Ladies and Mixed Doubles

The Eighth Oceania Squash Championships will be held under the umbrella of the XIIIth South Pacific Games.

7. A new Charter has been adopted governing the South Pacific Games, which in future will be known simply as the "Pacific Games" in recognition of those Pacific basin countries north of the equator. Player eligibility conditions in the new Charter preclude some players from continuing to compete in the Games, and most likely in future Oceania Squash Championships.

8. Planning for the Ninth and Tenth Oceania Championships is progressing, with anticipation that the Championships will be held under the umbrella of the Pacific Mini Games in 2009 in Cook Islands and the Pacific Games in 2011 in New Caledonia.

Negotiations are taking place in each instance for the construction of new squash facilities, particularly to cater for the doubles events.

9. Elite players from the Oceania region continue to make an impact on the world scene, particularly sisters Rachael and Natalie Grinham, and David Palmer who are highly ranked in their respective WISPA and PSA rankings.

Australia and New Zealand invest significantly in elite player programmes, which is extremely important for furthering the development of our sport.

10. Masters Squash continues to play an important role in the region. The Oceania Masters Championships are held on an annual basis. The 2006 Championships have recently concluded with over 70 players assembling on Norfolk Island for keen competition and to enjoy the hospitality of the Norfolk Island community. The 14th Oceania Masters will return to Norfolk Island in 2007.

11. The Oceania region was also graced with another world squash event within the last twelve months, when Squash New Zealand and the city of Palmerston North hosted the 14th World Junior Men's Individual and Teams Championships in July 2006.

This major event was well staged, and congratulations are extended to the New Zealand organisers and supporters for hosting a magnificent event.

It was the culmination of 2 years planning, organisation and facility development to host the event. An Educational resource was developed in conjunction with the event to link schools and clubs with Squash New Zealand's microcourt programme.

A full glass competition court was also purchased to complement the World Junior Championships and provide an asset for ongoing promotion of the sport in New Zealand.

19 countries were represented at the Championships.

12. Junior development remains a difficult challenge for the Oceania region, and highlights the need for greater technology tools and resource material to counter the vast distances and expensive travel costs within the region.

Positive progress, however, has been made in this area, where some of our member countries have implemented aggressive youth programmes with the support of parents, coaches and volunteer administrators.

The OSF is currently reviewing the format and procedures of the Oceania Age Championships which have not been held for a number of years. However, there are positive signs that this event will resume in 2007.

13. The OSF obtained funding from the WSF for nominated coaching development programmes in the region. Funding was allocated towards programmes in Fiji, Cook Islands and Norfolk Island. The Fiji programme, which was further supported by foreign aid funding, has now been completed. The programme was an outstanding success. The programme in the Cook Islands is progressing, while the programme in Norfolk Island was delayed until administrative re-structuring of Squash on the Island have been completed. Both programmes should be finalised in 2006. The OSF is extremely appreciative of the funding support received from the WSF for these programmes. AUSAid funding has also been obtained to assist in PNG's junior coaching and development programme.

14. Unfortunately Papua New Guinea Squash was unable to host the PNG International in 2006, due to problems with the Squash facility in Port Moresby. This prestige event was hugely successful in 2004 and 2005, and attracted a high calibre of PSA players. The Oceania Men's Open Championship was linked to the International. Hopefully, the issue concerning the facilities will be resolved to enable the International to resume in 2007.

15. While the PNG International has hosted the greatest PSA prize money event in the Oceania region, Australia and New Zealand have been able to increase the number of PSA and WISPA events staged in their countries. With further financial backing, more events and increased prize money will attract a larger contingent of elite players down South and provide more exposure in the region for our sport.

16. Squash New Zealand has been very active in developing a new web based grading system, with planned implementation in 2007. The new system will deliver:

- Internet access to a broader range of data (e.g. playing history);

- Capacity to automate tournament and interclub results directly into the grading system; and
- Greater information/data capture and analysis.

Squash New Zealand is also driving a number of other key activities, including:

- Governance Research;
- Marketing and Promotional material for Clubs and Districts; and
- Capability Audits of its 11 District bodies.

17. Squash in PNG saw the revival of the Federation Cup in 2005. This brings together teams comprising the best players from each city, allowing players to represent their region of origin, permitting one expatriate per team, and providing funding subsidies for travel to the event.

The Cup will continue in 2006 and is assisting to promote the sport in PNG, which has 300 active players with 25 courts located in 8 playing centres.

18. The 3rd World Deaf Games was also successfully conducted in Melbourne, Australia during the reporting period. The Deaf Games emphasised that squash was a sport that can be played by anyone. The Australian Deaf Squash Association has now become an associate member of Squash Australia; an example that other may wish to foster.

19. Squash Australia has introduced an Athletes' Commission into its organisational and management structure. This will provide the Board and CEO of Squash Australia with a direct line of communication from the athletes.

20. The 5 year Squash Ball agreement between the OSF and Dunlop International is providing developing countries with much needed squash balls, primarily for use in their Junior development programmes. Under the agreement, squash balls are also provided to all Oceania Championship events.

Appreciation is extended to Dunlop International for their continuing support towards Oceania Squash.

21. General Meetings of the OSF are held on a biennial basis and timed to take place at the venue of the Oceania Championships. All full member countries were represented at the last meeting in October 2005 in Rarotonga. The next meeting will take place in Apia, Samoa in 2007.

22. The OSF has a number of Standing Committees, and have representatives from these committees on the equivalent WSF committees.

The OSF Rules and Refereeing Committee in particular has been extremely active both in supporting the WSF in its review process of refereeing structures, etc., and in promoting the awareness of refereeing throughout the region, improving the knowledge of the game generally, and upskilling refereeing standards.

The Coaching and Development Committee has also been active, particularly with the development of resource material to assist developing countries in the region.

23. The OSF has continued to maintain a close working relationship with its peer body, the WSF, and has received excellent support and co-operation from both the WSF Officers and its Administration over the last twelve months.