

## Squash Report

This report covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

It has been an eventful year for the squash section. Some highlights:

- **October 22 to March 23** - The Men's 1st and 2nd teams finished the winter season strongly in their respective leagues with the 1st team finishing fourth in Division 5 and the 2nd team missing out on promotion by just one win (finishing third in Division 7). Despite fewer available team players the Ladies team managed to also improve on their previous year's performance. The end of season finale, the Captain's Grand Prix, was held on 24 March.
- **November 22 to December 22** – November saw the return of the annual Autumn Competition, an event that allows Squash and Racketball (Squash 57) players of all standards to compete in a team based event. This event, as with previous years was a great success encouraging many members to participate who do not usually play in the club teams.
- **January 23** – Commonwealth Games Medal Winner and Warwickshire's most successful ever women's player Sarah Jane Perry visits the club to spend time with juniors answering questions about what it's like to have a world-class squash career.
- **March 23** - Paul Docherty was elected as the new Squash Captain at an EGM on the 9<sup>th</sup> March.
- **April 23** - An investment in refurbishment of both court facilities including cleaning/patching of the walls, sanding of the floors and remarking of both courts was completed. April also saw another successful Spring Tournament with the final played on the 29<sup>th</sup> April. For the first time we also ran a junior tournament on the same day as the Spring Tournament.
- **May 23** - A highly successful squash training trip to Lake Bled in Slovenia (May 3-7th) saw a dozen players from the section participating in daily squash coaching with Steve Townsend (head performance squash coach at Warwick University) as well as enjoying some of Slovenia's most beautiful scenery and some social and adrenaline fuelled activities.
- **May 23 - June 23** – Over six evenings, 120 cubs, beavers and scouts tried squash for the first time ever with the club receiving fantastic feedback on the sessions from the kids and the parents – with many interested in taking up squash and finding out more about the club.
- **July 23** – Another squash social sees ten squash members try out Padel at Solihull Arden club. Feedback from the those playing was that it is great fun and will appeal to both Tennis and Squash players alike.
- **August 23**. We entered 2 men's teams into the Warwickshire Summer Leagues. The first team finished mid table in Division 3 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Team provided a solid base to the table in Division 6 (whilst also providing an opportunity to introduce new players to Warwickshire league squash).
- **June 23 - August 23** – Much like waiting for a bus and then many arrive at once, a number of unexpected challenges were faced with the courts and supporting infrastructure over the summer. Our ground water pumping system sprung a leak that was only detected and resolved after seeing a rise in our monthly electricity charge, water ingress from a leak in the squash court roof needed to be fixed but combined with an electrical fire in the courts at the end of August to cause damage to both the gallery and the heating system. With tremendous support from section members who rallied quickly to help, the problems were resolved, and the courts repaired in a matter of a few weeks and just in time for our first Junior tournament.
- **September 23** - Warwick Boat Club was approved by England Squash to run our first external England Squash affiliated junior tournament – the Breakthrough Junior Open – in the last

weekend in September. The tournament was a fantastic success and saw over 60 young players from across Warwickshire competing in multiple age groups. September also saw our first "SquashSail" social event which saw an adventurous team from the section enjoy a social fixture with Dartington squash club before taking a leisurely Sail to Brixham before finally enjoy a well-earned (by that time) evening meal.

- **October 22 – September 23** – Throughout the year we continued to see strong participation in the internal leagues, running an average of 8 internal Squash leagues and 3 internal Racketball (Squash 57) leagues. A big success for the section this year has also been the growth of our junior section, with over 20 juniors now regularly attending coaching session every week and a number progressing to play in Warwickshire junior tournaments (including our own!) and even national tournaments. Adult coaching also continues to go from strength to strength with more than 30 players at all levels regularly attending group coaching sessions. With the growth in regular team players we have entered 3 men's teams and 1 women's team into the Warwickshire Winter 23/24 leagues (which is a strong performance for a club of our size and puts us back to pre-COVID levels of participation).

Whilst we have continued to see growth in the number of people regularly playing squash at Warwick Boat Club, we have resolved as a section committee to work in the coming year to put the section on an even firmer footing for the future. Specifically in the next year we intend to harmonise our coaching offering to members, continue our drive to attract new members, prepare a long-term plan for renewal of the squash infrastructure and look at ways to improve utilisation of the courts for the benefit of members – particularly in the off-peak times.

If you are currently not experiencing the joy of Squash/Squash 57 and would like to give it a try (particularly as the winter sets in!) then I strongly encourage any member of the club to contact me on [squash@warwickboatclub.co.uk](mailto:squash@warwickboatclub.co.uk). We regularly run Squash 57 introductory/beginners session at 1pm on Saturday afternoons and it's a great way to find out what you are missing!

Paul Docherty

Squash Captain