

OCEANIA SQUASH FEDERATION

FEDERATION GENERAL MEETING, RAROTONGA, COOK ISLANDS
21 OCTOBER 1997

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I am pleased to report to the members of the Federation on the occasion of this meeting of the OSF. The report covers the two year period from the previous general meeting held in Apia, Western Samoa in October, 1995.

The Federation has been represented over the last two years by the following Officers:

Col Clapper	President & Executive Director
Bob Stirrup	Vice President
Malia Perelini	Vice President
Phil Trenorden	Vice President
Grant Scoones	Vice President

Grant Scoones vacated his position when his role with the New Zealand Association ceased. Appreciation is extended to the Vice Presidents for their support during the last two years.

A revision of the OSF Constitution has been a major undertaking since the meeting in Apia. The original Constitution adopted at the inaugural meeting of the OSF in 1992 is outdated and in need of replacement. A revised document is being presented to this meeting for the members consideration, and I would encourage your support of the document.

Although membership of the Federation has not grown, it is very encouraging to see increased activity emerging from Papua New Guinea and Norfolk Island, while New Caledonia continues to maintain a progressive outlook to developing the sport. Recent initiatives by Niue to join the Federation are also encouraging. Australia and New Zealand have been going through a difficult period for some time, with declining numbers of players and court closures. However, there are positive signs on the horizon of a better outlook for the sport in these countries. The strength and growth of squash in Australia and New Zealand is vital to furthering the development of the sport in the entire Oceania region, and the support being provided to the region by both these countries cannot be overemphasised. Sincere appreciation is extended to Squash Australia and New Zealand Squash for their contribution and commitment to the Federation since its inception.

A challenge for the Federation in the next two years will be to:-

- resolve the current difficulties with a lack of membership participation by Vanuatu and Tahiti;
- encourage Fiji to take on a greater role in the Federation;
- expand the game to more countries in the Pacific region;

- address the difficulties associated with a number of members being reluctant to meet their financial commitments within reasonable timeframes; and
- consider other avenues for funding the sport in the region.

The major squash event for the region is without doubt the Oceania Cup. The 1995 event in Apia attracted participation from five countries - New Caledonia, Fiji, Cook Islands, Tonga and host country Western Samoa. Etuale Sefo and his team of helpers are to be congratulated for presenting an extremely well organised event.

The 1997 Oceania Cup promises to be bigger, with more countries participating in the event.

Another major challenge for the Federation is to re-establish the Cup every fourth year into the South Pacific Games program. It is extremely disappointing that the considerable efforts made to have the sport included in the next Games in Guam has not been successful. Targeting for the 2003 Games will need to begin at the earliest possible time.

A great disappointment for the Federation has been the lack of commitment by many members towards Junior Squash. This has been reflected in the Federation's inability to stage the OSF Junior Championship. New Caledonia sets a strong lead in developing its junior players. Other countries are encouraged to follow their example so that the future of the sport can be assured.

Masters Squash is an area that has considerable growth potential for the region. Norfolk Island hosted the OSF Masters in 1995 while Cook Islands hosted the event in 1997. The 1996 OSF Masters was hosted by the Nelson Club in New Zealand in conjunction with the New Zealand Masters. Appreciation is extended all three hosts for conducting the events on behalf of the Federation.

With the emergence of squash as a participant sport in the Commonwealth Games, those OSF Member countries that are eligible to compete in the Games will need to consider their membership status within the OSF. As eligibility requirements prescribe that Commonwealth member countries must be full members of the World Squash Federation, there may be considerable financial benefit for associate member countries to upgrade their membership status.

The main method of communication by the Federation to its members has been via regular Newsletters. Format changes have been made with recent Newsletters to improve readability, and hopefully this has assisted in the conveying of information from the Federation.

At the last general meeting in Apia the inaugural President, Murray Day, retired from office. Murray made a valuable contribution to the Federation, being at the helm during the first five years of its operation. In recognition of his contribution, a proposal is being presented at this Meeting for life

membership to be bestowed on him. The support of all members is being sought regarding the proposal.

The accounts of the Federation have been audited, and a financial statement covering the two year period to 30 June 1997 is being presented to this meeting for the members consideration.

Sincere appreciation is extended to all those who contributed towards the operation of the Federation over the last two years, and in particular:

- The Vice Presidents;
- Greg Middleton, Chair of the Coaching Committee;
- Ron Griffiths, Representative to the WSF and Chair of the Major Games Committee;
- Greg Hutchings, Chair of the Championships Committee;
- Dianne Davis, OSF representative on the WSF panel for junior women and women;-
- Michael Davis, for assisting with managing the Federation's finances;
- Peter Hurwood, Honorary Auditor; and
- Lorel Clapper, for undertaking the Federation's typing.

And finally, it has been a pleasure to have fulfilled the role of President & Executive Director during the last two years.


Col Clapper