

Europe: Regional Vice-President's Report

2020 Overview

In line with the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act, ESF successfully ran a virtual AGM using an online platform, after initially adjourning the meeting.

At the virtual AGM, 22 Member Nations were represented. ESF has 46 Member Nations.

The AGM re-elected Rosie Barry (IRE) and Thomas Troedsson (SWE) as Vice-Presidents.

The motion to change Officers terms to 2 terms of 3 years with effect from 2019 was passed.

The ESF Board from September 2020 comprises President Hugo Hannes (BEL) and Vice-Presidents Rosie Barry (IRE), Jim Hay (SCO), Jackie Robinson (ENG) and Thomas Troedsson (SWE), supported by Peter Derrick (ESF Treasurer and Company Secretary).

Claire Leech is the ESF Office Manager and Joanne Collins is the part-time Office Administrator.

Portfolios

- Championships and Marketing Committee: Thomas Troedsson
- Junior Committee: Jackie Robinson
- Masters Committee: Rosie Barry
- Referees & Coaching Committee: Jim Hay

2020 General

- COVID-19 has affected squash in Europe since mid-March. In most countries, venues were closed with a few exceptions (Sweden). Restrictions for play started to lift from May and differed from country to country.
- The postponement and then cancellation of ESF tournaments has produced frustration for all parties involved (ESF, MNFs, hosts, clubs etc.), not to mention the financial impact. The desire to get back to some 'normality' is strong however the uncertainty with increasing numbers of positive tests and the introduction of further restrictions in different countries is reality.
- The second wave of COVID-19 is now impacting. Hence, it is not possible to have a fair policy for Europe.
- Travelling within Europe will continue to severely limit the chance of any international competition, and in any case requires testing and quarantine in most cases.

2020 Administration

- Online Board meetings are currently held monthly. All contact between the Board members and the staff is made by email and telephone. We have adapted to this new style of communication.
- The office staff began home working on March 17th in line with UK Government advice. To maximise the Government furlough scheme whilst ensuring essential office administration routines were completed, the team furloughed 90% of hours in May, 70% in June, and 80% during July and August. Both office staff are now working in accordance with the flexible furlough scheme until the end October.



2020 Championships and Circuit Events

- All 7 Championships were cancelled. The Spring events caused some administrative issues because MNFs had already entered teams and players. We initially postponed, however ultimately cancellation was the only option. ESF feels for the players and the hosts, however the travel restrictions and especially the health of the players remain our primary concern.
- Between March and December 2020, 26 Junior circuit events and 15 Masters tournaments were cancelled.
- Coaching and referee courses were cancelled.
- ESF are reviewing the 2021 Championship planning, and continue to assess the Juniors and Masters circuits which are cancelled until January 2021.

2020 Finance

- Overall income is likely to be reduced by € 100,000.
- The Board aim to offset this reducing expenditure on Officer Travel and Committee expenses and in addition by claiming furlough payments to contribute to staffing costs, in the hope that break-even will be achieved at year end.

Future

- ESF are receiving monthly information from Members regarding restrictions in each country.
- There is a need to keep people in the sport, since some clubs are struggling and individuals may have been tempted away to other sports that they can play (tennis, golf etc.).
- Concern for venue owners, as more than 90% of our courts and venues are privately run. WSF, ESF and the national federations have no impact on these venues however we need their infrastructure to play our sport.
- Today there are Government restrictions on playing both recreational and competitive squash. No players, no atmosphere and vice versa.
- There are also restrictions for the catering industry. The difference being that other sports like table tennis and badminton use municipal halls. A Squash centre with a daily revenue of less than €100 will not cover the costs.
- Concern over how many venues will close in 2021 for economic reasons.
- Possible registration for WSF World Championships, depending on the uncertainty and European travel restrictions, with worry regarding the opportunity to practice at the level required.
- Many Governments have reduced subsidies (up to 25–30%) and many federations will suffer financially. The subsidy system varies from country to country. Only those that have a chance to win a medal will go for it or when they are subsidised.
- The Board and the Committees are comfortable with virtual meetings which means less travel costs. However, they will never replace for 100% the physical meetings.
- The issue today is to bring squash back to the level as it was and then look forward and draw conclusions. A review of ESF events and how they may be improved and/or adapted to make best use of whatever the situation is post COVID-19. Opportunities are limited due to pandemic.

14th October 2020