

# Instant Update



**To: WSF MEMBERS**

cc: WSF Management Committee, WSF Regional Vice-Presidents, WSF Committees, WSF Accredited & Approved Companies, WSF Referees

**Dear WSF Member,**

Issue 16 of the WSF Instant Update provides an update on key WSF developments since the last edition. In order to make it easier to track progress against our key goals (WSF Strategic Plan 06-09), we have restructured the document headings and I shall cover these topics upfront. I hope you find the enclosed informative and please do send any feedback or questions you may have.

**Profile**

**Ø World Championships Re-launch**

The “Re-launch” initiative intends to raise the profile of the WSF World Championships, our most important asset. Phase I will consist of two main deliverables: work with assigned hosts to maximise the profile of events in the period 07/08 and develop the marketing framework that will guide how we present our events, and indeed, our sport, in the future.

There has been considerable progress in our aim to **maximise the profile of our World Championships in Phase I.**

We quickly overcame the difficulty posed by the cancellation of the hosting plans for the 2007 Women’s World Open (WVO), announced in February, by assigning the event to Madrid – a high profile city with Olympic aspirations for 2016. The plan to stage the final rounds beside the Royal Palace is already generating media interest and we will continue to work with Madrid officials to make this the best ever WVO.

We are also working closely with our Federation in India to develop TV plans for the World Men’s Team Championships. With a solid entry of 27 nations, all ingredients are in place for a great event.

Once the plans for 2007 have been finalised, we will be working with our hosts of 2008 World events.

The **Marketing Framework** project that was communicated to all MNFs in March 2007 is now almost complete. This work will impact the entire “re-launch” initiative and therefore has received much attention in recent months.

The first phase of knowledge gathering culminated with a successful Think Tank session in February in Manchester attended by Zena Wooldridge, Nick Rider, Paul Walters, Toby Marcham (Dunlop), Andrew Shelley, Jenny Tranfield, Howard Harding, Angus Kirkland, Frank van Loon and the undersigned: many thanks to all for your commitment, experience and creativity as we prepared to design the research.



Some Member National Federations (MNFs) completed a brief questionnaire that WSF distributed to learn more about how Squash is doing across the world. This information has been very useful and I'd like to thank you for your cooperation. For those MNFs that have yet to send in the questionnaire, we would still appreciate your feedback.

The second phase consisted of a quantitative research study designed to learn more about our sport from a marketing angle. The key objectives were to obtain a comprehensive profile of global squash players, understand the current health and equity of the "Squash brand", and, identify what benefits and emotional attributes are associated with the sport. To achieve the above, we placed the study amongst two groups: "Squash players" (thank you England Squash, US Squash and Hong Kong Squash for allowing us to use your membership databases) and "Sport enthusiasts". The second group is particularly important because it allowed us to evaluate awareness, trial, trial barriers, equity and other key marketing variables among potential players. We are currently in the final stages of data analysis and I will share the key results and recommendations very soon.

The third and final phase will consist in the development of a sport-wide marketing framework. All key branding and marketing decisions will be based on the conclusions from the research study and you will all have the opportunity to make comments. This work is due to be completed in the next two months and will allow us to guide how we re-launch the WSF World Championships including its re-branding, re-brand WSF, generate new ideas to develop the sport and more. Stay tuned.

#### Ø World Championship News

- **Hoe Hin White Flower Ointment World Junior Women's Championships 2007** (Hong Kong, 1-11 August 2007) – 18 nations have entered the event and we welcome Korea and Zimbabwe who are participating in the competition for the first time
- **Women's World Open Squash Championship 2007** (Madrid, 21-27 Oct 2007) – preliminary rounds will be played at the Pallestra Club and from quarters onwards the action moves to the Glass Court that will be set beside the Royal Palace; WSF is grateful for the investment by the Madrid City Council and the support of Madrid 16
- **Endurance Men's World Open Squash Championship 2007** (Bermuda, 25 Nov – 1 Dec 2007) – the action will occur at the Fairmont Southampton Hotel overlooking the Atlantic ocean. The 37<sup>th</sup> WSF Conference & AGM will be held alongside the event with the AGM on 1<sup>st</sup> December
- **World Men's Team Squash Championship 2007** (Chennai, India, 6-12 December 2007) – 27 nations have entered the event and we welcome Chinese Taipei who is participating in the competition for the first time
- **World Junior Men's Squash Championship 2008** (Zurich, Switzerland, 27 Jul – 8 Aug 2008) – We will be collecting fees in Euros and the team entry form will be distributed within Jul/Aug 2007. The Organising Committee will be spreading the event across eight Squash centres to maximise the impact across the city
- **Hi-Tec Men's & Women's World Open Squash Championships 2008** (Manchester, England, 12-19 Oct 2008) – Manchester will host the World Opens (M/W) alongside the 38<sup>th</sup> WSF Conference & AGM; WSF will be working with our hosts to maximise the profile of the event including TV and Olympic lobbying plans; we are grateful for the investment by the Manchester City Council and its partners and UK Sport
- **World Masters Squash Championship 2008** (Christchurch, New Zealand, 20-25 Oct 2008) – New Zealand follows the successful World Junior Men's Championship in 2006 with the World Masters in 2008. This event draws the largest number of competitors among all WSF events and we expect the tradition to continue in Christchurch
- **World Women's Team Squash Championship 2008** (Egypt, dates TBC) – we are very close to announcing the dates of the event. WSF will be working with our Federation in Egypt to develop TV and Olympic lobbying plans

- **World Doubles Squash Championship 2008** (India, dates TBC) – Squash New Zealand has been leading work to revamp the Doubles discipline and we expect to test the new format at this event in preparation for the Commonwealth Games Delhi 2010; WSF will continue to support the growth of Doubles worldwide
- **World Cup** – WSF has decided to stage this important event again in response to interest from MNFs. Staging this event will build on our strategic objective to raise the profile of our World Championships. We worked hard to place the event in 2007 but ultimately this was not possible. We would now like to invite tenders for 2008. If you are interested, please contact me for further details
- **Tenders for World Championships Phase II (2009/2010)**
  - All events are available except the Men's World Open 2009 (Kuwait), Men's World Open 2010 (Saudi Arabia) and the World Junior Women's 2009 (India). The status of the Women's World Open Squash Championship is being discussed with WISPA
  - Tender documents will include changes related to the "re-launch" project and will be available in the next 3 months. Bidding MNFs are kindly asked to wait until the new documents are developed prior to submitting their tenders

### **Development**

- The Africa/PanAmerica portions of the 05/06 WSF Development Fund have been assigned to Kenya (development plans) and Canada (2007 WSF Coaching Conference)
- The 2007 WSF Coaching Conference will be staged in Calgary (Canada) from 6-9 September. Further details will follow soon

### **Olympic Inclusion**

- Ø sportaccord 2007 (Beijing, 23-27 April 2007)
- Susie Simcock, Jahangir Khan and the undersigned represented WSF at the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the annual international sports convention
- WSF is a member of and attended the AGM of the following organisations:
  - GAISF (General Assembly of International Sports Federations)
  - ARISF (Association of Recognised IOC International Sports Federations)
  - IWGA (International World Games Association)
  - IMGGA (International Masters Games Association)
- Additional meetings included:
  - Joint meeting of the IOC Executive Board and ASOIF
  - Kelly Fairweather (IOC Sports Director)
  - Ron Froelich (IOC Programme Commission)
  - Commonwealth Games Federation
  - Informal meetings with International Federations, IOC Members, event cities, suppliers, etc.
- Key Results/Learning:
  - The IOC Subsidy to Recognised Federations will increase from US\$ 10,000/yr to US\$ 20,000
  - The IOC plans to pass changes to the Olympic Charter in July 2007 to reduce the threshold for Olympic inclusion from 2/3 to simple majority and increase the minimum number of sports in the Games from 15 to 25. In addition, Recognised Federations in the shortlist will be allowed to make a brief presentation to the 2009 IOC Session in Copenhagen in October – when the decision for 2016 will be made
  - Participation across sport is declining, particularly among kids and teens, as a result of the boom of the video games, the Internet and other interactive "toys"
  - The IOC is looking at various initiatives to correct the aging population of their TV viewers and to ensure the relevance of the Olympic Games among youths
  - The World Games Kaohsiung (Chinese Taipei) 2009 will be held three months ahead of the IOC Session in which the programme for the Olympic Games 2016 will be defined. We will therefore need your cooperation in sending your best athletes to further our case. The TV host broadcaster is in place to provide production/distribution of the Squash competition

- Susie Simcock, along with two other GAISF Council Members, stepped down after seven years on the board. GAISF President and IOC Member Mr. Hein Verbruggen thanked her enthusiastically for her contributions throughout the years. After being a panel member on a key Conference topic in 2006, Susie chaired a topic in 2007 giving visibility and credibility to WSF. Susie remains on the board of the International Masters Games Association alongside influential IOC Members
- The IMGA announced the first European Masters Games event in Malmo (Sweden) from 29 Aug – 7 Sept 2008. Squash is part of the programme and I shall share further details as they become available
- All presentations and event details are available on [www.sportaccord.com](http://www.sportaccord.com). I encourage you to take some time to browse through these interesting materials



WSF with Madrid officials at the Opening Ceremony



An act during the Opening Ceremony

#### Ø Major Games

- WSF's Major Games strategy consists in:
  - Work to ensure continued participation in Games in which we currently feature. The only event where this is not necessary (as of Oct 06) is the Commonwealth Games
  - Work to increase our influence in the events in which we currently feature (e.g. increase number of disciplines/medals)
  - Work to try to have Squash included in events in which we currently do not feature or have featured intermittently (e.g. Olympic Games, All Africa Games)
- Pan American Games 2007/2011
  - The 2007 edition is in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 14-19 July 2007 following intensive lobbying in 2006 to ensure inclusion
  - We will have, as usual, a Singles and a Team competition
  - The venue can be seen at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Es4jhvbeLsE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Es4jhvbeLsE) (thanks Nelson)
  - I will represent WSF to continue building links with the Pan American Olympic Movement
  - The 2011 edition will be in Guadalajara (Mexico) and we have received support from the Organising Committee regarding our inclusion
- World Games 2009 (Kaohsiung, Chinese Taipei, 18-21 July 2009)
  - The competition will include Singles M/F 16 draw and an official Plate competition
  - The event precedes the 2009 IOC Session and it will therefore be vital to score a resounding success. You can help by ensuring your best athletes participate, if selected
  - We are working with the host broadcaster and Kaohsiung officials to develop a TV plan to maximise exposure for Squash
  - The Glass Court will be set in the same venue as Racquetball and Billiards – a major sport in Chinese Taipei
  - The official athletes party (a huge success in 2005) will be after all finals are completed on 21<sup>st</sup> July
- Commonwealth Games 2010/2014
  - The 2010 edition will be in Delhi (India) from 4-13 October 2010
  - The sports programme for Delhi has been defined as Singles (M/F) and Doubles (M/F/Mixed)

- New Zealand Squash is leading the initiative to revamp the discipline with the objective to make it more exciting to play and watch. The preliminary recommendation is to widen the court by 80cm and play best of three instead of best of five (still with PAR scoring). Other elements including rules are being looked at. I urge all nations with significant Doubles experience to work with NZ to test the new format
  - The 2014 edition will be in Glasgow (Scotland) or Abuja (Nigeria). The decision will be made in Colombo (Sri Lanka) during the CGF AGM in October 2007
- Asian Games 2010/2014
    - The 2010 edition will be in Guangzhou (China) from 12-27 November 2010
    - At first, significant lobbying was required to ensure Squash's inclusion; thanks to the efforts of WSF, Mr. Ramachandran (ASF) and David Mui (Hong Kong), Guangzhou officials have now agreed to add a Team competition and we hope there may be scope for Doubles
    - The 2014 edition has recently been awarded to Incheon (South Korea's main airport arrival city, minutes away from Seoul)
- Ø Olympic Programme
- The next decision in which Squash could gain inclusion onto the programme of the Olympic Games (2016) is on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2009 in Copenhagen
  - After a significant amount of work in 2006, we expect the 2007 IOC Session in Guatemala on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2007 to make vital changes to the Olympic Charter. These include the increase of the minimum number of sports on the programme from 15 to 25 and the reduction of the inclusion threshold from 2/3 to simple majority
  - The opportunity in 2009 is, on paper, much better than in 2005, as there are two spots available vs. none plus the favourable changes in the Charter described above. In addition, Squash comes in with the pedigree of having been voted as the number one sport for inclusion into the 2012 London Games ahead of with Karate, Roller Sports, Rugby Sevens and Golf
  - The IOC process leading to the 2009 decision will have two phases: the first phase starts with a questionnaire to benchmark non-Olympic International Federations (see below) and concludes with hopefully our selection into the shortlist that will go into the programme review with Olympic IFs post-Beijing (phase two)
    - June 2007: WSF and all currently recognised IFs will receive a questionnaire with criteria on:
      - o History of the IF
      - o Structure and composition of the decision-making organs
      - o Adoption and implementation of the World Anti-Doping Code
      - o Recognition of CAS
      - o Number of affiliated National Federations
      - o Participation by NFs in World Championships and Junior World Championships
      - o Competitions
      - o Continental and National Championships
      - o Athlete's Commission
      - o Presentation of the sport (steps taken by the IF to ensure that the outcome of the competition will be as objective and fair as possible)
      - o New media
      - o Finance
      - o Sponsors
      - o Broadcasting
      - o Ticketing
      - o Administration costs
      - o Strategic plan and priorities
      - o Scope of development programmes
    - 3 September 2007: Deadline for IFs to send back the completed questionnaire
    - September 2007: Analysis of information
    - 9 October 2007: Olympic Programme Commission to recommend a selection of Recognised IFs to the IOC Executive Board (EB)
    - April 2008: Report presented to IOC EB and selection of Recognised IFs to be included in the review process (shortlist of candidates for the two places available)

- The process for the second phase has not been announced yet but we know it starts in April 2008 and ends at the IOC Session in October 2009 and includes another questionnaire and much lobbying
- WSF has developed much credibility among the Olympic Movement following the 2005 IOC Session. We must leverage the momentum by presenting a united bid that recognises the learning from the 2005 process and the new themes including “Juniors” and “balance” – more on our plans in the run-up to 2009 in the next edition

### **Regional News**

- Africa
  - Kenya: In coordination with ASF, WSF granted Kenya the Development Grant that was developed following the 2005 AGM; Kenya developed a robust strategic plan and will be using the grant to assist in its execution
  - Ramy Ashour, Egypt’s 19-year old double World Junior Champion (2004/2006) who only turned professional in 2006, has reached a world number 3 ranking this month and is within striking distance of the number 1 spot
- Asia
  - India: Squash has been named a “priority” sport by the Ministry for Youth Affairs and Sports, following India’s first ever medal at the Asian Games (Doha 2006)
- Europe
  - ESF: Hugo Hannes (President, Belgium Squash) has been elected President of the European governing body succeeding Chris Stahl who served for the maximum term. Mr. Stahl has been appointed as European representative to the WSF Competitions and Disciplinary & Appeals Committees
  - Montenegro: The newly formed Federation was accepted as ESF’s 44<sup>th</sup> Member at the 2007 AGM in Riccione, Italy; Montenegro will become an Associate Member of WSF
- Oceania
  - John Holland (President, Squash Australia) has been appointed as Oceania’s Regional Vice-President, replacing Gerard DeCourcy who has stepped down given his new role in the WSF Management Committee
  - Sarah Fitz-Gerald has been appointed as Oceania representative to the WSF Olympics & Major Games Committee
- PanAmerica
  - U.S.A: Squash’s governing body in the U.S.A. has changed its name from United States Squash Racquets Association (USSRA) to US Squash. The organisation will conduct a strategic planning session on 3-4 August 2007 to map out its future growth plans
  - Brazil: The governing body has been working tirelessly with the Organising Committee of the Rio 2007 PanAmerican Games to coordinate the delivery of the Squash competition (see Major Games under Olympic Inclusion)

### **Other WSF News**

- 37<sup>th</sup> WSF Conference & AGM 2007 (Bermuda, 29 Nov – 1 Dec 2007) – Bermuda have confirmed the hosting of our annual event with the draft programme as follows:
  - 28 Nov: Management Committee, ExCo and Championships Committee meetings
  - 29 Nov: WSF Conference (all delegates)
  - 30 Nov: WSF Conference (1/2 day, all delegates)
  - 1 Dec: WSF AGM (1/2 day, all eligible delegates)

We will be announcing the theme of the Conference in the coming weeks and I can confirm that we will have more space in the programme for MNF presentations and general discussion

- WSF CEO Conference 2007: Following interest at the 2006 AGM, WSF is developing a plan to stage this event in Manchester around the British Open. England Squash is fine-tuning the logistics but I can confirm that the planned dates are 18-20 September (half day on the 20<sup>th</sup>) and that the package cost will be around £300 (including two nights bed & breakfast and registration fee). The concept is to provide a forum in which best practices and ideas on all aspects of Squash

administration can be shared and debated. The invitation is open to all CEO's or people running the sport in our MNFs. To confirm the event, we now need to know as soon as possible if you will be sending a delegate. If you plan to attend, please also express topics that interest you

- Tracy Langton-Jones started as Administration Manager of the WSF on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007. Tracy brings a diversity of office/people management experiences and strong administration skills. For those of you who have not yet communicated with Tracy, she is leading office administration work, refereeing, anti-doping, AGM preparation and dealing with your queries. She is also providing administrative assistance on World Championships and can be reached at "[tracy@worldsquash.org](mailto:tracy@worldsquash.org)". Welcome Tracy
- The 2007 WSF Handbook was distributed to all members in March; if you have yet to receive your copy, please contact Tracy. Please note that some of the Committees have changed name, following decisions made at the 2006 AGM; all Committee members were appointed or re-appointed for 2007/2008 and the only additional changes are mentioned above under Regional News
- I was invited as a panel member on the subject "Who holds the power in sports media" alongside Michael Payne (former Marketing & TV Director, IOC) at the 2007 Sport Business Campus conference (London, 18-19 March). These interventions represent opportunities to raise the profile of the WSF as well as bring back learning that can benefit you. I encourage you to browse some of the materials and presentations at: <http://campus07.sportbusiness.com/index.htm>

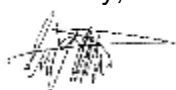
#### **Management Committee Meeting** (New York, 11-13 May)

The board met for the second time since the 2006 AGM and the following key decisions were made:

- The "World Championships Re-launch" initiative was reviewed in-depth; much progress has been achieved in our "profile" plans for World events in 2007 as well as the marketing/branding work that will guide our "re-launch" efforts – a presentation/workshop led by the Agency allowed ManCom to understand the preliminary results from the survey and brainstorm on the branding implications; it was agreed that the WSF Marketing & Media Committee will not be staffed up at this point
- The tendering process for World Championships in Phase II of the "re-launch" (2009/2010) will start in approximately three months. WSF will require mandatory "profile" elements to be included in the bid budget (e.g. TV and presence of WSF Media Director). Senior events will include more requirements than Juniors/Masters; more details will follow soon
- Two MNFs had been bidding to stage the WSF World Cup in 2007; ultimately, both bids were dropped and ManCom agreed to start marketing the event for a possible staging in 2008
- An "WSF Instant NewsFlash" (or similar name) service will be implemented to provide you with breaking news that can assist in the promotion of Squash in your country; these will be distributed via email from the Office and will complement the WSF Instant Update
- Scoring – ESF has expressed interest in evaluating the feasibility of playing the European Team Championships using "Point-a-Rally" scoring to 11. ManCom agreed to set up a Working Group to study the topic in the near future
- Refereeing – three new appointments have been made at International level (David Atkins, Jos Arts and Jason Foster); the CBTA was successfully applied at the European Team Championships with over 100 assessments made; WSF will publish the final document in the very near future

Please let me know your feedback as this Instant Update is done for, hopefully, your benefit.

Sincerely,



Christian Leighton  
Chief Executive & Secretary General  
World Squash Federation