

**REPORT TO THE 28th A.G.M OF THE BARBADOS SQUASH RACKETS ASSOCIATION
(BSRA) - FOR THE PERIOD MAY 30, 2007 TO MAY 20, 2008.**

This report is submitted on behalf of the Council of the BSRA to the membership and covers a period of approximately twelve months since the last Annual General Meeting.

ADMINISTRATION

Affiliation

The BSRA is recognized as a National Sports Federation by the Barbados Olympic Association Inc. (BOA) and the National Sports Council (NSC). The BSRA is also affiliated to the World Squash Federation (WSF), the Federacion Panamericana de Squash (FPS) and the Caribbean Area Squash Association (CASA).

BSRA Council

At the 27th AGM the following members were elected: Mr. Craig Archer – President; Mr. Orson Simpson - Senior Vice President; Mr. Laurie Parris - Junior Vice President; Mr. Shawn Simpson - Treasurer; Mr. Alex McDonald - Secretary; Ms. Camille Nurse - Assistant Secretary; as well as the following three Council Members: Mr. Gavin Cumberbatch, Mr. Norman Rice and Mr. Richard Walcott. Miss Cheri-Ann Parris was elected as the Junior Representative. The Council met on seven occasions during the period under review, all in the Barbados Olympic Centre.

Sub-Committees

The seven appointed BSRA sub-committees and their conveners were as follows: Disciplinary (Norman Rice), Fund Raising (Shawn Simpson), Junior Development (Gavin Cumberbatch), Public Relations and Marketing (Alex McDonald), Selection and Ranking (Craig Archer), Squash Development (Orson Simpson), Tournament (Craig Archer / Laurie Parris). All sub-committee members are thanked for their various contributions to the performance of these committees.

Membership

There has been no significant change in the BSRA's membership base. There are three affiliated clubs: Barbados Defence Force (BDF), Barbados Squash Club (BSC) and Pleasant Place Squash Club (PP), and approximately 60 ordinary and 50 junior (i.e. under-19) paid up members. There are approximately 200 – 250 persons who play socially. Mr. Rudy Goodridge remains the only Honorary Life Member of the Association.

SPORTS POSITIONS HELD, AWARDS AND APPOINTMENTS

Barbados Olympic Association Inc. (BOA)

Craig Archer is currently a Director of the BOA. His second four year term of office will end later this year, after the summer Olympic Games in Beijing, China.

World Squash Federation (WSF)

Craig Archer is a member of the Technical Committee of the WSF which is chaired by Chris Herridge of England. Most of the work of this committee is carried out via e-mail, but Craig Archer attended one meeting of this committee that was held immediately after the WSF AGM in Bermuda on December 1, 2007. The current two-year term of this committee will end in October 2008.

Caribbean Area Squash Association (CASA)

Craig Archer was re-elected to the position of 7th Officer of CASA at the beginning of this year. This fifth consecutive two-year term of office will end in August 2009. The other CASA Officers are as follows:

President – Mr. Roger Salandy; Vice President – Mrs. Nicole Currie; Secretary – Mrs. Michele Cornilliac; Treasurer – Mr. Julian Henry [all T&T]; 5th Officer – Ms. Karen Anderson [J'ca]; 6th Officer – Mr. Ian Patrick [Cayman].

INTERNATIONAL OR MAJOR MEETINGS ATTENDED

Caribbean Area Squash Association (CASA)

Orson Simpson would have represented the BSRA at the CASA AGM that was to take place in Jamaica in August, 2007. Due to the passage of Hurricane Dean this tournament and the AGM had to be abandoned. It did not prove possible to hold an AGM before the end of 2007 so for the first time since the formation of the CASA in 1977 there was no formal handover from one Executive to another at a properly convened CASA General Meeting. The transition from the previous Executive to the current one was effected by e-mailed communication between the nine member territories of CASA in December 2007.

Federacion Panamericana de Squash (FPS)

Craig Archer represented the BSRA at the 19th Annual General Meeting of the FPS held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on July 18, 2007. This was the eighth FPS AGM that the BSRA has attended. There was also an informal meeting of FPS members held in Bermuda in December 2007. The next AGM will be held during the Pan American Squash Championships in Cuenca, Ecuador in June, 2008.

World Squash Federation (WSF)

Norman Rice and coaches Richard Walcott and Marlon White attended the 8th WSF Coaching & Development Conference in Calgary, Canada in September 2007. Barbados was the only Caribbean country represented at this conference. Grant funds to assist with this trip were obtained from the **National Sports Council and the Barbados Olympic Association**. Both bodies are thanked for this kind assistance which has proven very beneficial to these individuals and should help improve the delivery of coaching to our juniors especially.

Orson Simpson attended the 9th World Squash Refereeing Conference in Chennai, India in December 2007. Once again, Barbados was the only Caribbean country represented at this conference. Grant funds to assist with this trip were obtained from the **Barbados Olympic Association** who must be thanked once again for this assistance. In addition to attending this conference, Mr. Simpson (a certified B-1 referee) had the honour of refereeing or marking six matches in the 21st World Men's Team Squash Championships, which was being held at the same time, including the opening match of the tournament on the showpiece all-glass court as well as another match involving World #1, Amr Shabana, from Egypt.

Craig Archer represented the BSRA at the 37th Annual General Meeting and Conference of the WSF held in Bermuda from November 29 to December 1, 2007. This was the sixth WSF AGM that the BSRA has attended. The next AGM and Conference will be held in Manchester, England from October 16 – 18, 2008.

Barbados Olympic Association (BOA)

Orson Simpson and Norman Rice represented the BSRA at the Annual General Meeting of the BOA held at Grand Barbados on May 30, 2007. Craig Archer also attended in his own right as a BOA Director.

National Sports Council (NSC)

At the NSC's Annual Awards Ceremony held on March 1, 2008 Miss Cheri-Ann Parris was presented with an award in the Junior Outstanding Sportsperson (Female) category. Tanya Marshall, a National Junior squash player, was also awarded in this category for her achievements in the Martial Arts.

FINANCE

Sponsorship

The continued staging of domestic competitions and events, as well as overseas tours and the other work of this Association, would be impossible without the continued generous support of sponsors. Sponsorship and grants from the **Barbados Olympic Association Inc.** was in excess of \$44,000 in 2007 and exceeded that from all other sponsors combined. The BOA continues to be the lifeblood of many sports in Barbados and the BSRA is exceedingly grateful for its assistance. The other tournament sponsors such as: **Sagicor General Insurance Company, Playfair Ltd., River Bay Trading Company, Rotherley Construction Inc.** as well as the **National Sports Council** are all thanked for their continued and loyal support of the tournaments on the local squash calendar. All of these competitions were held at the **Barbados Squash Club** and the management of the BSC is thanked for its continuing support of squash over the past twelve months. The ever present **Mr. Tony Roach**, the long serving Club attendant, is especially thanked for all his hard work during our events there.

Fund Raising

With the assistance and hard work of **Tisha and Leon Truss** our fund raising efforts over the past year were more successful, with the Fun Day event held at the BSC in July 2007 being the stand out. As this will be another expensive year the new Fund Raising Committee will need to keep working hard over the coming year in order to raise funds to cover the costs of our local programmes and overseas tours.

As you will see from the Treasurer's report which will be presented shortly, the BSRA realized a deficit of over \$10,400 in 2007 as compared with a small surplus of about \$400 in 2006. This deficit was financed from the BSRA's reserves and did not affect the BSRA's cash flow position over the past twelve months. Both the income and the expenses of the BSRA increased by almost 100% and as you will see from the Treasurer's report are now both in excess of \$100,000.00.

The challenge for the incoming Council will be to manage the increase funding that the BSRA now has access to in such a way that the BSRA's cash flow position is not compromised in this year or into the future.

The cost of the BSRA's tours this year will be high once again since most of these planned tours are far away: e.g. the 26th annual **Junior Caribbean Squash Championships** (July 9 - 20, 2008) will be in Bermuda; the 7th annual **Pan American Junior Squash Championships** will be in Bogota, Colombia; and the annual senior **Pan American Squash Championships** will be in Ecuador. In addition, CASA has increased the team size to 19 persons for the biennial **Southern Caribbean Squash Championships** which will be held in August in Guyana. As usual the BSRA's desire will be to send these teams on tour at minimal cost to the players selected to represent their country.

COMPETITIONS / TOURNAMENTS

Regional Competitions

In October 2007, **Cheri-Ann Parris** won a bronze medal for Barbados in the Ladies Individuals at the 6th Junior Pan American Squash Championships held in Kingston, Jamaica. This is only the second individual medal ever won by a Barbadian at this U-19 event. Well done Cheri-Ann!

Caribbean Competitions

The highlight of the year in review was the performance of the Barbados senior squash team at the 16th CASA Squash Championships in August, 2007 in Kingston, Jamaica. In a watershed moment for local squash four Barbadian players reached the semi-finals of the individual championships for the first time. In the ladies final the top seed, **Karen Meakins**, was surprisingly defeated in five games by Jamaican, Karen Anderson, and hence finished as the runner-up. **Cheri-Ann Parris** defeated the higher ranked Trinidadian Rhea Khan for third place. **Jenny Armstrong** finished fifth and **Nadia McCarthy** finished a commendable eighth.

On the men's side **Gavin Cumberbatch** seemed to revel in the hot conditions and destroyed several higher ranked opponents including the #2 seed Nick Kyme (Bermuda) in the quarter finals, Chris Binnie (Jamaica) in the semi-finals and Trinidadian, Colin Ramasra, 3-0 in the final to claim the first Caribbean Individual Championship for Barbados in 30 years. **Shawn Simpson** lost to Binnie in four games to finish fourth. Congratulations to all concerned!

In the team competition that followed, the Barbados Men's, Ladies' and Veteran's teams all played unbeaten and were all poised to sweep the team titles when the tournament was cruelly interrupted by the monstrous Hurricane Dean and had to be abandoned without reaching a satisfactory conclusion. The entire team of eighteen players and two officials (i.e. Manager, Orson Simpson, and Men's Coach, Richard Walcott) are congratulated for their excellent performances and it is hoped that they will be as successful when the tournament is next played in Trinidad in August 2009.

At the 25th **Junior Caribbean Squash Championships** held a month earlier in Tortola, BVI in July 2007, under the guidance of new team manager, **Yvonne Parris**, and junior coach, **Marlon White**, the Barbados junior team placed fourth in both the girl's and boy's team events. In the individuals, Barbados came away with one gold medal with **Cheri-Ann Parris** winning her first Caribbean under-19 title and fifth overall without dropping a single game. **Asha Gibbs** placed fourth in the GU-13 age group on her second squash tour and Matthew Hutchinson placed sixth in the BU-13 age group. The two outstanding Barbadian players in the team were **Cheri-Ann Parris** who played unbeaten in the #1 Under-19 position, as well as the tigerish Matthew Hutchinson, who played his heart out to win all five of his team matches, even beating several opponents in the process who had finished ahead of him in the individual event! The return of this touring party was unfortunately delayed by threatened industrial action at the time by some LIAT personnel. In the absence of the appointed Manager (who had been given permission to travel on to the World Junior Women's Squash Championships with her daughter Cheri-Ann Parris), the coach, Marlon White, chaperoned the team back to Barbados. Two other LIAT staff members (Oliver Haywood and Eric Ward) are to be thanked for assisting the team in its efforts to return safely to Barbados.

Domestic Competitions

In the period under review there were five tournaments held in Barbados, all of which were BSRA organized. In June 2007, in the **Playfair Barbados Squash Open**, Mike Bull (England) defeated Shawn Simpson (Barbados) in five games in an entertaining final. **Gavin Cumberbatch** placed third by virtue of a default from Charlie Sonson. In the ladies final **Karen Meakins** won her eighth Barbados Open title in straight games from the top-seeded Carrie Hastings (England). **Sonia Perkins** won by default to claim third place.

In October, the **River Bay Seniors Squash Open** was held and in December the fourth annual **Rotherley Junior Open** was held. Details of the winners were not available at the time this report was being prepared.

Thus far this year, the **Sagicor General Junior National Championships** were held in April. The BSRA received the same sponsorship as last year from our loyal sponsor who has sponsored this event since 1979! Details of this tournament were well covered in the local press and are available on the BSRA's web-site.

The recently concluded 34th annual **National Squash Championships** were sponsored for the eleventh year by the BOA via its domestic competition grant. In the Individual finals Karen Meakins outplayed Cheri-Ann Parris 3-0 to claim her record eighth straight national title while Shawn Simpson claimed his record fifth straight men's championship with a convincing 3-1 win over the #2 seed, Gavin Cumberbatch. The age group champions were: Ladies over-40 Ayoni Bradshaw; Men: Mark Gilkes (over-35); Mark Sealy (over-40); Craig Archer (over-45); Cliff Nolan (over-50); David Spink (over-55). Once again this tournament received extensive press coverage and complete details are to be found on the BSRA's web-site.

Sincere thanks go out to the members of the Tournament Committee, and all the other volunteers, who helped run these various BSRA tournaments throughout the year.

SEEDING (PROVISIONAL)

As a result of all the above activity the top ten seeded players for 2007 are as follows:

- Men:** (1) Shawn Simpson (2) Gavin Cumberbatch (3) Mark Sealy (4) Fabian Goodridge (5) Bryant Cumberbatch (6) Marlon White (7) Nigel Griffith (8) Alex Garcia (9) Rhett Cumberbatch (10) Mark Gilkes.
Ladies: (1) Karen Meakins (2) Cheri-Ann Parris (3) Sonia Perkins (4) Jenny Armstrong (5) Lilianna White (6) Carla Jackson (7) Nadia McCarthy (8) Bo Harris (9) Ayoni Bradshaw (10) Elizabeth Johnson.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Over the past year we have continued to receive reasonable coverage for local tournaments in both the print and electronic media. This coverage, however, is usually conditional on press releases being written and sent to the media houses since very few sports journalists in Barbados understand our sport. Both the *Barbados Advocate* and the *Nation* newspapers must be praised, however, for the excellent coverage given to squash in recent times. The new P.R. and Marketing Committee will need to work harder to spread the workload and make the game of squash more newsworthy, since that is the only way that the image of squash will improve. Members are once again reminded that much information about the Association, as well as full results of most local tournaments, can be found on our website www.squashbarbados.org

JUNIOR DEVELOPMENT

Both Richard Walcott and Marlon White continue to oversee the coaching aspect the Junior Development Programme (JDP) which takes place from 12 noon to 4 p.m. on Saturday afternoons at the BSC. The challenge for the JDP now is to bring the level of administration up to par, since this area has been falling down over the past two or more years. Parents of juniors in training are invited to assist the BSRA and the JDP in this regard. In addition, all National level and former National level players are urged to offer to assist with a few sessions of the JDP, which runs for approximately ten consecutive weeks, three times a year. Between 35 and 45 juniors are being coached at present, which represents a slight increase in the general attendance level in recent years.

SQUASH DEVELOPMENT

Officiating Programme (Refereeing)

The **Caribbean Officiating Programme for Squash (COPS)** was held again in Barbados during the period under review. Ten persons from two Caribbean countries received certification in refereeing during the **Playfair Barbados Open** in July 2007. In addition, a similar event was held in Jamaica in August 2007. In total 52 persons from six countries have been certified over the past three years in this programme, including 11 at the B level, 13 at the C level and 28 at the D level. This Barbadian initiative has the blessing of CASA and has been hailed as a tremendous success at the Caribbean, Pan American and the World level. Once again *Squash Canada* provided a Level A National Examiner and World Referee (Graham Waters) who conducted the training and assessment along with the two local B-1 referees (Craig Archer and Orson Simpson) who are now qualified to certify and evaluate up to and including Level B. Four levels of certification are available in this programme:

- Level D - Has passed exam and is somewhat knowledgeable of rules. Can mark and referee lower level Inter-Club level matches.
- Level C - Has passed exam and has average knowledge of rules. Can referee lower levels of Inter-Club level matches (#2 to #5 string matches), and early rounds of National Championships.
- Level B - Has passed exam and has better than average level of knowledge. Capable of competently and confidently refereeing Inter-Club #1 string matches and the finals of any local tournament, including National Championships.
- Level A - Has passed exam and has high level of knowledge about rules. Capable of confidently refereeing at the CASA Championships and /or the FPS Pan American Squash Championships level.

A follow up course is planned for immediately prior to the Barbados Open in June 2008 (utilizing the local assessors) and it is hoped also during Southern Caribbean Championships in Guyana in August. It is hoped that more regional Level B referees will be certified as trainers during this year.

Coaching

As mentioned previously in this report national junior team coach, Richard Walcott and Marlon White, together with Norman Rice attended the 8th WSF Coaching and Development Conference in Canada. The BSRA has seen some benefits already from exposing these coaches to this high level coaching course. The next step forward for the BSRA will be to secure the services of a full time Squash Technical Director for 18-24 months minimum. This need is urgent and must be addressed by the incoming Council within the next 3-4 months.

Facilities

The BSRA does not own any squash courts and continues to rely on the BSC to provide courts at a reasonable price in order to play all of its tournaments and events. The building of, or access to, new squash courts should occupy the attention of the incoming Council as a matter of urgency since the lack of courts is retarding further development of the game locally.

Squash DVDs

The BSRA owns several excellent DVDs of top level squash matches which we will screen this year to members and other interested persons. Two copies of "Calling the Shots", a refereeing DVD issued by the WSF, have also been purchased and screened.

CHALLENGES

Criticism vs. Assistance

It is disappointing for me to report to another AGM that, for yet another year, some members of the BSRA Council, including the undersigned, have been subjected to torrents of destructive criticism and abuse from a tiny minority of members. This is uncalled for and this negative and counterproductive criticism should stop. It should be remembered by all that members of Council are not paid to do the Association's work and volunteer a lot of time to the BSRA's cause. Several extremely capable administrators over the past decade have been forced to leave as a direct result of this persistent, negative and unnecessary criticism from a tiny minority. The efficiency of Council, and hence the work of the Association, continues to suffer as a result of these departures.

Another challenge that needs to be addressed is to spread the workload of Council since, for another year, there was much too much work being undertaken by too few persons, both on and outside of Council. Members who offer themselves for positions on Council should carefully consider if they have the time to devote to the work of the BSRA before accepting a nomination for any position. If they do not have the time then it will not be unreasonable for them to decline to serve.

All members, especially current and former national players, are once again urged to offer to assist the BSRA whenever possible. Over the past year the work of the Association was undertaken, once again, by a tiny fraction of the membership. This trend should not be allowed to continue in the year ahead since there is **plenty** of work to be done to build on the successes of last year and to improve in areas where the Council did not do as well as it could. Although more could always be done, I am confident that members will agree that the BSRA enjoyed a good year, on many fronts. I am therefore looking forward to the challenges of the year ahead!

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 Craig Archer - President
 2008/05/20