

# SQUASH WALES WEBINARS APRIL 2020

## Questions & Answers

**Q:** Where did that data of Sport Wales info about demand for Squash come from and how reliable is it?

**A:** Schools surveys 2018. It's a Sport Wales bi annual survey. All results can be found on the Sport Wales Website –

<http://sportwales.org.uk/research--policy.aspx?tab=2>

**Q:** Will there be training for young players to move into coaching roles?

**A:** There will be accessible training available to all coaches working in our programme and to coaches who show the desire to work in our programme, including young players. A comprehensive Mentoring programme will be introduced to ensure all coaches have support and guidance at every stage of their development.

**Q:** Will details from all the Power point information be sent out to everyone post chat?

**A:** Anyone who wants a copy of the presentation can download it below.

**Q:** Regarding training nights, can the seniors still be able to attend Wednesday night in North's?

**A:** As explained in the presentation, Training Nights are an area we are reviewing. Currently they are not value for money and sustainable in some areas, while other areas are missing out. The senior and transition players will not miss out as they will have access to their own senior / transition programme. However, Emyr's point regarding the junior players enjoy getting on court with their role models is a valid one and plans are in place to incorporate this at our National Squads.

**Q:** You mentioned the latent demand in schools - just wonder about the school's strategic plan and whether this has been reviewed recently and is still 'fit for purpose'?

**A:** The data has been provided to Squash Wales from Sport Wales. This data is the school's sports survey. Sport Wales has been monitoring and analysing patterns of sports participation for over 20 years. All the research and policy can be accessed at the Sport Wales website - <http://sportwales.org.uk/research--policy.aspx?tab=2>

**Q:** Very interesting data on school and club activity. Is a suitable budget in place to fulfil the enormous job that lays ahead?

**A:** Funding is tight as always, but yes, we believe there is. That's where key targeted interventions will be key to enable us to spend our money wisely - more effective and efficient. The output will be closely monitored by both Squash Wales and our funding partner Sport Wales.

**Q:** My question is why was there fewer school visits from 2018-2019 to 2019-2020? Big decrease from 36-14

**A:** As this was a result of the previous team, we have not dwelled on why this happened and look to move forward and rectify the situation to ensure it doesn't happen again.

**Q:** Good opportunity for other coaches, agreed. But even with mentoring of coaches will they be as effective as previous HPC'S?

**A:** Yes, and we believe they will be more effective than in the previous system. Any coach selected to work in the system will be of the required quality and standard to deliver what that session needs. The coaches will also have access to any training or support they require.

**Q:** As an active UKCCL3 coach what are the likely coaching opportunities within the pathway including coaching and coach development both locally and Nationally?

**A:** Communication will be sent out shortly to all coaches explaining the process of working in the system. Currently the programme is being finalised and we are establishing what support coaching requirements we require.

**Q:** The focus of Regional Development will be Relationship building almost as a sales Rep. Very different to the role of a coach. Is this skill something that will be desired within the role of development officers?

**A:** Yes - The development of key partnerships is one of the main learning messages taken from the review. All staff will need to be upskilled to reflect these challenges.

**Q:** How can Abergavenny club be more involved with Squash Wales as part of this plan?

**A:** As in the presentation -Squash Wales management will visit all clubs within Wales during the next 18 months. During these visits, discussion will take place on how the relationship between the Governing Body and the club can improve. Looking specifically in ways which we can support your club.

**Q:** What is happening with Caldicot?

**A:** Caldicot is ongoing. Discussions are still taking place between all parties.

**Q:** How is the West Wales Academy going to be developed to ensure we retain juniors in the system?

**A:** Numbers allowing Regionalised Academy Sessions will be introduced, to give the players in West Wales access to local quality training. This will take some time before being introduced as the work that the development team will be undertaking will be instrumental in getting the numbers to the required level.

**Q:** Travel is an issue in West Wales and prevents players progressing in the Pathway, how will we address that?

**A:** Numbers allowing Regionalised Academy sessions will be introduced to enable players in West Wales to access quality localised training sessions.

**Q:** Clubs down West (Narberth) want support to attract juniors to play in a junior section at their club. How will Squash Wales help with that?

**A:** As in the presentation -Squash Wales management will visit all clubs within Wales during the next 18 months. During these visits, discussion will take place on how the relationship between the Governing Body and the club can improve. Looking specifically in ways which we can support your club.

**Q:** Could we develop a National schools competition programme?

**A:** Key interventions need to be built in at all levels of our pathway. Participation and progression activities will be offered. A schools' competition programme may be something that will be offered in time. But first we need to build up a firmer base at entry level -Foundation phase and look to attract more players into the sport

**Q:** Do we know how many people all told play squash in Wales?

**A:** Data and Insight has been identified as an area of improvement required for Squash Wales. We currently have limited data available on overall participation in Wales. As per presentation we need to link in with key partners in order to access this data and use more efficiently and effectively.

**Q:** Do we measure the difference in membership between Leisure and private clubs?

**A:** Data and Insight has been identified as an area of improvement required for Squash Wales. We currently have limited data available on overall participation and membership in Wales. As per presentation we need to link in with key partners in order to access this data and use more efficiently and effectively.

**Q:** When will the children know what will happen when we re-start?

**A:** Communication of the Performance Programme will be published and communicated to all stakeholders by 30th May 2020. Due to the current climate we are scenario planning for many possible start dates.

**Q:** Who will be coaching Mid & North, because there will be lack of consistency if Greg is coaching in the South?

**A:** As explained in the presentation the Performance Programme is currently being finalised and as soon as we have completed this (30th May) we will know what support coaches are required and will allocate those to the sessions. Any coach working in our pathway will be suitably qualified and have the relevant skill set to deliver that session.

**Q:** Will the North RDO have a role visiting the Schools?

**A:** Yes. This is one of the primary roles of our Development officers' -School Visits -improving links between Squash Wales-Schools-Local authority/Trusts-Sports Development -Clubs

**Q:** What was put in place following the HPC's leaving to fulfil the rest of the pathway programme?

**A:** Following the termination of the HPCS contracts on 31st March a full plan was put in place to enable the performance programme to continue until the end of the season, which included National Squads, Academy Squads, Training Nights and Representational events. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 this was not possible.

**Q:** What is Squash Wales doing to up its game on Welsh language activity?

**A:** Welsh language inequalities has been identified as an area of improvement required for Squash Wales. We currently have very limited resources in the medium of Welsh. As per presentation we are appointing a Welsh speaking development officer. We will then link in with key partners in order to address this area more efficiently and effectively.

**Q:** With Greg based in the South and more playing numbers there, will North Juniors miss out?

**A:** Not at all. No player in the Performance Programme will miss out. We are producing a programme that is aligned to the Squash Wales strategy and will be sustainable and value for money across the whole of Wales. Both the National Junior Coach and the Performance Director will be extensively travelling to the whole of Wales delivering sessions. Although the National Junior Coach is based in South Wales, he will be responsible for the whole programme and no player whether living in West Wales, Mid Wales, North Wales or outside Wales will miss out.

**Q:** Will we be using volunteer coaches?

**A:** All coaches working in our Performance Programme will be paid the going rate for the session they deliver, aligned to their coaching level. If a coach is shadowing another coach as part of a

training/mentoring session this could well be on a volunteer basis as it is designed to help accelerate their development.

**Q:** What is the strategy and process for engaging with the clubs?

**A:** As in the presentation - Squash Wales management will initially visit all clubs within Wales during the next 18 months. During these visits' discussion will take place on how the relationship between the Governing Body and the club can improve. Looking specifically in ways which we can support your club.

**Q:** How do we identify juniors who want to move into coaching roles?

**A:** Greg is currently developing a Coaches Network and all information on this will be communicated very shortly to all stakeholders.

**Q:** What are we doing with social media to operate differently?

**A:** As per our new strategy Squash Wales strategy 2020-2025 - better use of modern platforms to improve communication across a diverse range of audiences, has been identified as one of our key objectives. Over the next 5 years Squash Wales will look to achieve this.

**Q:** Who will be coaching our Wednesday one squad?

**A:** As explained in the presentation the programme is currently being finalised and will be communicated by 30th May 2020.

**Q:** Who will be accessing this squad (players)?

**A:** As per the answer above the Performance Programme is currently being finalised and will be communicated by 30th May 2020.

**Q:** Where will it take place each week and what time will it start and finish?

**A:** As per the answer above the Performance Programme is currently being finalised and will be communicated by 30th May 2020. Due to the current climate we are scenario planning with various options on proposed start dates and venues that will be available to us.

**Q:** What is happening with the Leagues

**A:** There has been a league panel set up to deal with the current disruption within our league system. The panel are closely monitoring the situation and will report back accordingly. Regular updates will be conveyed and made available on the Squash Wales website and social media platforms as and when available.

**Q:** An over-riding view, from many of those responding, is a real concern and sense that a consequence of this Staffing Review may be to damage their children's future squash potential and prospects.

**A:** There is no foundation in this view and the opposite is the case, as shown in the presentation. This is also not the "sense" we get from everyone we have spoken to. The Restructure is being implemented to accelerate the development of all children in the pathway as it is going to be far more targeted and specific to the individual's needs.

**Q:** There's also concern that with a change in personnel, some juniors may be "out of sight" and dropped from Welsh squads and lose the honour of a Welsh cap; would that be fair / or appropriate after a several months long break from being able to get on a squash court?

**A:** This is a totally unfounded statement as nobody is out of sight and all players will have a fair and equal opportunity to attend Academy/National Squads. Nobody ever has been, or ever will be, out of our sight. Nobody has been dropped from any squad and all players will have a fair and

equitable opportunity to attend Academy/National squads. Those players who don't have a cap due to the virus will have the chance to win a cap when the restrictions are lifted.

**Q:** In the proposal, some feel that there appears to be inequality in access to High Performance Coaching between North and South Wales, potentially including the academy nights. Some see this as preferential treatment to South Wales, with a knock-on consequence of a lack of awareness or delay in identifying any emerging talent in North Wales. The question is, therefore, whether it would make better sense to have a National Junior Coach equivalent in North Wales, with the same set of responsibility and coaching credentials, providing a more level playing field and perhaps introducing greater healthy competition?

**A:** Again, the suggestion of inequality is totally unfounded and not based on facts. The inequality is in attendance in North Wales, not "access". Also, as the numbers clearly show, this suggestion is not viable. In a few years' time if numbers significantly increase this could very well be a valid suggestion. We are implementing a Coaches Network for all of Wales which will show clearly the coach's pathway along with providing more opportunities, support and guidance to all our coaches in the pathway.

**Q:** Associated with point above, parents have said they feel that players in the South Wales younger age groups seem to receive significantly more regular academy training nights; do you agree that this puts the North Wales juniors at an immediate disadvantage?

**A:** No, we do not. As you will have seen by the attendance figures in the presentation, the training night area is one that we are reviewing in detail. Changes obviously must be made in this area and as soon as we confirmed the programme, we will communicate this back to everyone. The new structure will provide the same opportunities across the whole of Wales, subject to there being numbers to warrant it.

**Q:** You will understand the point that Andrew Evans has, over many years, built relationships with players and parents; importantly, he has had a positive impact on juniors as they develop, plus he is a coach that juniors respect and admire. Respondents believe that his links to current world-class players has also been very inspiring and motivational, for our younger junior players. These relationships take time to build and parents have asked whether he will have any future involvement in coaching junior squash in North or Mid Wales under the new re-structuring? Quite simply, respondents are asking if it is Squash Wales's decision to part company with the HPC, based in North Wales?

**A:** Squash Wales have parted company with all HPC's. Squash Wales has had a restructure based on factual evidence and data collected to align its programmes with the new strategy. This involves appointing a NATIONAL JUNIOR COACH, along with qualified support coaches for targeted intervention work as and when required. Any coach that wishes to be part of the new Coaching Team will be given the opportunity to participate.

**Q:** If the answer to this above is "No", and that there will be no HPC in future, then could you specify what plans Squash Wales does have in place for the elite and emerging talented junior players from the North - Mid Wales area, to ensure their development continues?

**A:** The performance team will provide all the necessary support for all emerging talented juniors players in Wales regardless of region. Detailed plans are in place and due to be finalised in the next month which will clearly set out the pathway for all junior players in Wales. All juniors who show the required talent and commitment will receive greater contact time than previously allocated under the old pathway. Coaches Network will be in place to provide coaching opportunities for all coaches who meet the required criteria and show the desired commitment. Vigorous criteria have been set up for all coaches wishing to coach in the pathway to ensure higher standards are attained and the coaches are continually improving and setting the

standards. This will ensure the highest level of coaches and coaching provided for our juniors in the pathway.

**Q:** Squash Wales have advertised for a squash development role in North Wales. On this, our respondents noted a lack of clarity and were unclear whether this role is a hands-on coaching role that will directly benefit the children or, whether it is more an office-based facilitation role. Also, the original advert states that there was an articulated requirement from stakeholders that the successful candidate should have the ability to communicate in the Welsh or English language. While many understand that sentiment, if this is a coaching role with a greater emphasis on Welsh language, it could possibly alienate some juniors and introduce delays to the coaching session. Parents say they are not aware of language ever being raised as an issue. Could you explain fully the RDO role and how the post will link into the coaching role within Clubs and all current development opportunities? Will there be an expectation that local, voluntary coaches will take on greater responsibilities?

**A:** There is full clarity on the role as the Job Description is available for anyone to review on the Squash Wales website under "About Us" then "Vacancies". This is a Development role and is not a "hands-on coaching role" in any form. As evidenced on the Webinar, and by feedback from several stakeholders, there is clearly a requirement for this role to be bilingual, Welsh and English. There will not "be an expectation that local, voluntary coaches will take on greater responsibilities"

**Q:** An important part of the continuing development of junior players is an opportunity to be part of a training squad, when training is with all the stronger players in the area. The monthly academy squad in the rural mid Wales has proved the point; they've been vital in getting the better players together in sessions that are always productive & strong. Indeed, the current Under 17 Welsh Boys Team comprises of two juniors from Mid Wales and so, the question is, will the new structure continue to support these elite players?

**A:** As explained in the presentation we recognise this is an area that has missed out on regular sessions. The new structure will not only continue to support these elite players, it will enhance what they will receive going forward.

**Q:** Some juniors currently attend a weekly Squad 1 Session, is this going to continue and if so, where will it be and with who?

**A:** As explained in the presentation, it is currently not value for money as only 2-4 players regularly attend. We are in the process of drawing up plans, but no player will receive less sessions than what was previously in place.

**Q:** What can Squash Wales tell us about their commitments for those juniors based in North and Mid Wales and are currently involved in elite junior programmes such as Senior Transition Squads?

**A:** The commitment will at least be the same. There will be senior transition squads run and all the players at the required standard will be invited to attend. The same as it is in all regions in Wales.

**Q:** Are Squash Wales in a position to document and publish who will have overall responsibility to deliver coaching; in particular, when and where will this take place in North and Mid Wales for the 2020-21 squash season?

**A:** A document detailing this will be documented and published end of May 2020.

**Q:** Some elite juniors have been playing for several years and reached a high level to represent Wales at different international events; despite this lost season, will they remain eligible for a Welsh cap?

**A:** The COVID-19 situation has been terrible for the whole World. It is unfortunate that the representational events have been postponed/cancelled this season. We are waiting details from the European Federation to see if they are to be re arranged. If they have played for Wales, they will get a cap. If not, they won't until they do play for Wales.

**Q:** In the context of the opportunities they offer individuals, what value does Squash Wales place on the Junior and Senior Inter Counties competitions?

**A:** Squash Wales does value this competition as it gives our players another opportunity to compete against players from outside Wales. And subject to restrictions being lifted, we will support these events going forward

**Q:** Who, in future, will be the main contact within Squash Wales for Club official and coaches?

**A:** David Evans will be the main contact within Squash Wales regarding coaching. Roy Gingell will be the main contact within Squash Wales regarding Club officials.

**Q:** Finally, a plea that Squash Wales ensure that all National Squads and Tournaments do not take place in Cardiff when Wales Rugby are playing; this impacts costs for everyone as they can increase by at least 50%.

**A:** Agreed

**Q:** Where are the NE & NW Academy nights going to be held?

**A:** As explained in the presentation the Performance Programme is currently being finalised and will be communicated by 30th May 2020. At present due to the COVID-19 we are scenario planning, as many venues we currently use have had their courts taken away to make way for hospital beds.

**Q:** Where will the half term Bangor Academy squads be held?

**A:** As explained in the presentation the Performance Programme is currently being finalised and will be communicated by 30th May 2020. At present due to the COVID-19 we are scenario planning as many venues we currently use have had their courts taken away to make way for hospital beds.

**Q:** There is an APC once a month in Llanfyllin. Will that continue and who will coach it?

**A:** It will not be named APC anymore as we want to ensure the Performance Programme is consistent and transparent. As explained in the presentation we recognise that Mid Wales players are currently missing out and we are planning to rectify this.

**Q:** Will the South East Squads continue?

**A:** As explained in the presentation the programme is currently being finalised and will be communicated by 30th May 2020.

**Q:** Are Squash Wales in touch with Newport Squash Club to provide support following their coach leaving?

**A:** We are in close contact with the official club coach Ben French. He will be invited to join the Coaches Network which will provide opportunities for all coaches to progress and receive the necessary support

**Q:** What is the best way to encourage my young daughter to play?

**A:** In conjunction with the development and performance team, opportunities will be increased with players wishing to transcend from development to performance. Initially for anyone's daughter, the obvious route would be via Academy 1 sessions. A full programme will be published in the next month clearly detailing these opportunities

**Q:** Any more information on 5 Nations or other international matches?

**A:** We currently have no updated information from any of the representational events that were postponed due to COVID-19. As soon as we receive any further update, we will be in contact with the relevant parties.

**Q:** What plans are in place for players living outside Wales?

**A:** As the presentation showed we currently have many players playing for Wales that live outside of Wales. The National Junior Coach will be in regular contact with the player and their personal coach to ensure everyone is aligned and working together as one team.

**Q:** Are there plans to invite Senior Academy players to help juniors at their sessions?

**A:** Plans are in place through the Coaches Network to involve past and current senior / junior players. A number of these players will be contacted via the Coaches Network. The principle of using peers and role models to engage the next generation is an area we clearly wish to utilise.

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