



President's Newsletter

October 2021

Welcome to the second newsletter in the quarterly (approximately!) series designed to update members on what's going on at the RFA. It's been a busy few months both on and off the courts. I much enjoyed my day out in July watching some fives at the SW Open organised by Wayne Enstone, being extremely impressed both with the very high quality of play and levels of fitness. A far cry from the 1980's....

Strategy update

Below is the strategy update slide reviewed by the Board at its meeting of 23 September. In case readers still have not familiarised themselves with our strategy please check it out on our website [here](#).

Reducing dropout rate

As indicated, the National Schools Championships were indeed most successful with over 100 participants competing in various aged-grouped competitions at Alleyns in August. The event went very smoothly thanks to the efforts of David Butler and Hamish Buchanan. The summer timing proved to be popular with participants and as a result we are looking to hold a new tournament for school leavers and university students next summer. This is in combination with the Young RFA initiative which we hope will encourage younger players to keep on playing after leaving school.

Protect existing courts

Hamish Buchanan, Julie McIntyre and I visited St Dunstan's College in September to discuss with the Headmaster, Director of Development and Bursar how the RFA could assist the College in the building of three or four new courts. These would replace those that were demolished to make way for a new suite of teaching buildings. It was most pleasing to meet a school senior leadership team that is so obviously committed to fives: very fitting for a

RFA Strategy Update

Issue Two: 16th September 2021

OVERALL STATUS

Last Board Meeting

- Agreed to launch Patronage scheme
- Agreed to launch Young RFA initiative

This Board Meeting

- Review patronage scheme response
- Approve Club KO dinner arrangements
- Consider membership recruitment

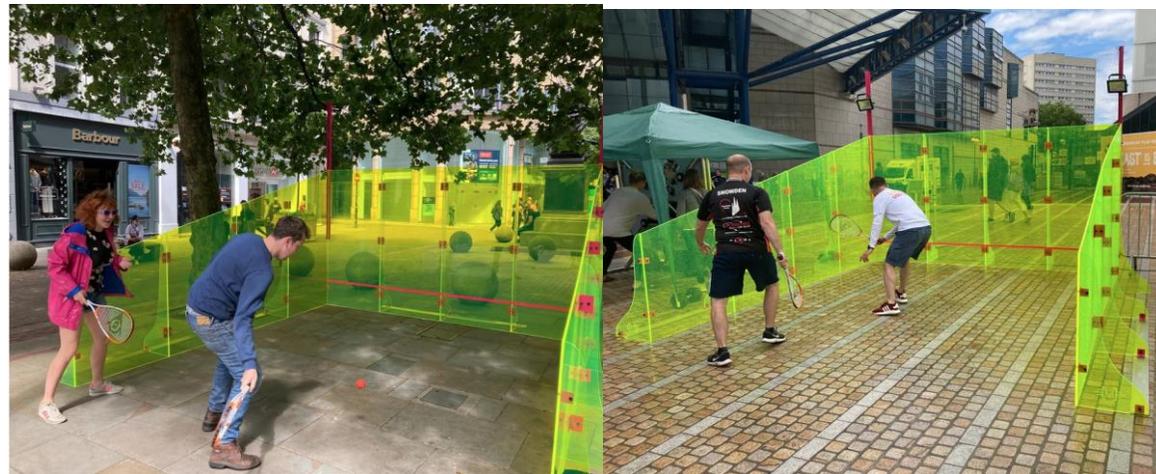
Issues/Challenges and discussion items

- Membership recruitment
- RFA team bandwidth
- Communication with members

Workstream	Key Activities
1 Reduce dropout rate after school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Schools Tournament very successful • Possible summer 2022 school leavers tournament • Young RFA
2 Protect existing courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Dunstan’s visit • Christs’ Hospital • Mellior Sports meeting
3 Encourage new players to the game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stoke Newington relaunch of fives • “Town clubs”
4 Effective Fundraising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patronage scheme • New members • Club KO Dinner

school which has such a long and prestigious fives history. The proposed location for the new courts is very central and they liked our suggestion that the new courts should be glass-backed so that passers-by can easily see fives at play. The next step is a follow-up meeting next month with the Bursar to discuss how the £250,000+ required can be raised.

Stuart Kirby and Peter Mellor spent a day with Mellior Sports who have developed some innovative designs for squash courts, including pop up ones, such as the ones below. Their approach could be utilised to develop cheaper and quicker-to-build new fives courts and also to host exhibition games as part of our promotion of the game to the wider public. Stuart and Peter continue to talk to Mellior Sports.



New players

Along with Tom Maconie we visited Stoke Newington School in September to assess what work needs to be done to get their six courts back in play. Fortunately, not much is the answer, so we are working with the Headteacher to incorporate fives as part their PE curriculum and have some 200 pupils a year being introduced to the game. To help with this we are funding the purchase of balls and gloves and the initial round of coaching. We would like to set up a new Town Club there allowing members of the local community to play as well. If you live near Stoke Newington and would like to play at the newly refurbished courts please get in touch with Phil Atkinson at phil.atkinson@rugbyfives.com

Fundraising

The Patronage scheme launched back in June has got off to a good start. We now have 23 Patrons bringing in over £5,000 this year, many of whom have indicated that they will do this on a recurring basis. My thanks go to each and every one of them. The scheme is open-ended and is a great way of giving very practical support for the game. Please click [here](#) for more information if you'd like to find out more.

Last year the RFA as a registered charity signed up to the Amazon Smile scheme. This allows Amazon customers to have a portion of their spend on goods bought from Amazon to be donated to their favourite charity. While the amount donated through each transaction is small it does add up over a period, and as one well known supermarket chain says, "Every Little Bit Helps". To make the RFA your favourite charity, please click [here](#).

This is the last plug for your cash in this edition. Honest. As a charity we can claim 25% of the subscriptions and donations that we receive through the Gift Aid scheme. Not all RFA members have signed up to this and we estimate that this means we're leaving about £2,000 a year on the table. So, if you're a UK tax payer and would prefer to give 25% of your subscription/donation to the RFA rather than HMRC, please get in touch with James Tilston at james.tilston@rugbyfives.com

SAVE THE DATE: RFA Dinner Saturday 23 April 2022

We're organising a dinner for RFA members and some guests during the Club KO weekend next April on the Saturday night. It will be held at St Pauls School. The purpose of the dinner is four-fold: to have fun, to recognise the work of the unsung heroes of club fives, to update attendees on court building activities and very importantly to raise funds. Please save the date now and watch out for further detailed announcements via email and the website.

RFA Webinar

We hosted an on-line webinar in September for a number of Masters in charge of fives at schools and club secretaries. The purpose was to inform them in greater detail of what the RFA is up to and to obtain feedback as to what they think the RFA should be doing. Fortunately there was a lot of common ground(!). Seriously, the main point to be worked on is the provision of coaching for new players and for new Masters in charge. We are now developing a new coaching plan which will be part funded by the RFA with the intention of significantly increasing the number of qualified coaches and deploying them around schools and clubs. The webinar was recorded - those interested in listening to the proceedings should contact me for the link at david.parlby@rugbyfives.com. A second webinar will take place in March 2022.

General Secretary

Phil Atkinson announced at September's AGM that he will be stepping down as the RFA's General Secretary next September after seven years of sterling service. An advertisement for his successor will be published shortly, so do please keep an eye out for that and let us know if you're interested in taking on the part-time paid role.

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Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter which I hope you find to be of interest and informative. Any comments on content for future editions would be most welcome.

Stay safe and play well.

David Parlby
RFA President