



## **UPDATE FROM THE TSA EXECUTIVE – APRIL 2012**

The Executive has met three times since being elected 3 months ago in Perth. It has involved a fair amount of time and work bringing the 3 new members of the team up to speed with all the current issues in seniors tennis, but we think we are almost there! But of course, most of the real work is done between meetings.

There appears to be some confusion about who is responsible for what on the new Executive. Please refer to the “Executive Allocation of Duties” which is on the website under “Administration” if in any doubt.

### **Australian Teams Carnival and Individual Championships**

- Our view is that, all circumstances considered, the Perth event was a great success for those who participated. Even though the numbers were down somewhat (112 teams and 302 individuals which was disturbingly low) TSWA turned in a handsome profit due to a combination of hard work, good organization and good support for the bar and canteen.
- The 10 year age brackets in the Teams Carnival were well accepted and on the recommendation of the Ratings Committee, the Executive have approved them for 2013 as well. While in some ways it is unfortunate that we have to return to Perth next year, we are grateful to TSWA for putting up their hand again when we were most in need, and we are sure that they will do a fine job again.
- We received a number of comments, mostly about the length of the two week event, and the amount of tennis involved, all of which have been reviewed by the Executive. We are in the process of asking the States for some firm recommendations on any changes they may wish us to consider, always bearing in mind our stance that the Carnival is a fun event catering to a broad range of playing abilities. The Presidents have endorsed our view that at this stage at least, the event will continue to be held in January.
- We are constantly monitoring progress in respect of the 2013 event – the organizing committee there is under the Chairmanship of Mac (Gary) McDonald. We have requested a preliminary budget by end May, and amongst many other things, are having continuing dialogue about the condition of the back courts and whether other venues should be used.
- In March I also visited Tasmania and had a very productive discussion with Mark Handley, CEO Tennis Tasmania, and Andrew Youl, Board Member Tennis Tasmania, about the 2014 Championships. They now have a fully informed view of the complexities of running the event. They are discussing the matter with their Board and will give us a commitment by end April.

- Because Perth is running two consecutive years, we have also reviewed future venues for the event. At this stage, they are 2013 Perth, 2014 Tasmania (to be confirmed) 2015 ACT, 2016 Victoria, 2017 South Australia and 2018 Queensland.

### **ITF and IPIN issues**

- The Executive has discussed this issue at length, and we appreciate that the requirement to register on the IPIN site has produced some frustration for some players wishing to participate in ITF events. Many others I should say have adapted to the process without any difficulty.
- The Executive is of the view that, desirably, the ITF tournaments in our calendar should remain (and hopefully retain or improve their ITF grading) and not be reclassified as National Ranking Tournaments. This enables us to retain our standing in the international tennis community and gives our better players the opportunity to achieve international ranking points. Our responsibility is to work with the ITF to simplify processes and procedures, and we continue to do that. IPIN is here to stay.
- One change we are considering though, is to convert the Australian Claycourts to a Closed event ie. non-IPIN players can compete with or against IPIN players (although you must have an IPIN to score ranking points) and by and large we can run the event without the constraint of numerous ITF regulations. This is on the proviso that it is able to retain its Grade 2 status, and we are discussing this with the ITF at present.
- Likewise, the use of Seniors Tournament Planner (TP) software as required by the ITF has proved challenging for some Tournament Directors. We have made some progress in this regard by agreeing a process with the ITF, in terms of which the TP file is received earlier, with significant advantages.
- The Executive considers that it would be preferable to migrate to TP sooner rather than later, and the full implications of this are being considered by a sub-committee headed by Yvonne Stanton.

### **Australian teams and selection issues**

- The 8 teams that participated in the World Seniors Championships in San Diego last month performed exceptionally well. The hard courts took their toll, but for the 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, our team of Wayne Pascoe, Gary Thoroughgood and Glenn Busby, won the Austria Cup. The ladies Bueno Cup team of Ros Balodis, Brenda Foster and Leanne Swaysland also triumphed.
- In the individual events, Jurate Hardy (singles), Ros and Leanne (doubles), Greg and Michael Evans (doubles) and Brenda Foster (mixed) won gold medals.
- The new selection criteria seem to have been well accepted. The Executive is considering whether the criteria relating to overseas based players should be less onerous.
- New selectors Colin Holgate (ACT), Jo Walker (NSW) and Bobbie Edwards (WA) take office next month and we thank outgoing selectors Andrew Rae, Wendy Weir and Lyn Mortimer.

## **The States and Tennis Australia (TA)**

- I have met formally with the Presidents in all States other than South Australia, which I will visit in May. Where possible, I have also met with the CEO or senior management in each of the Member Associations to discuss our operation, challenges and future direction.
- To this end, we have drafted a revised “sample” Service Agreement, primarily for use in WA where no agreement is in place, but which will also be sent to the other States for their consideration and use.
- We continue to have a sound working relationship with TA, and our service agreement with them is currently being re-negotiated. Once again, we express our thanks to TA for their continued support and assistance – despite comments we sometimes hear to the contrary, TA support our overseas teams to the extent of more than \$100k per year, in addition to other support to TSA for insurance, marketing and advertising.

## **Financial**

- On the recommendation of our Treasurer Peter Froelich, we have migrated our accounting system from the somewhat cumbersome MYOB to Reckon Online Cashbook, which is simpler and informative and suits our purpose more appropriately.
- TSA remains in a reasonably sound financial position with surplus funds to cover operating costs and to utilise for the promotion and development of seniors tennis. Our view is to use funds where we believe the business case supports it, and not to hoard it “for a rainy day”
- Peter has also done some fine new work on the GST registration issue, and subject to comment from the States, we will de-register from 1 July. Because we are committed to contribute to reducing costs in the State divisions, the Executive has decided to pass on the benefits of this move in all instances, at some cost to TSA. For example, the member registration fee currently \$13.20 including GST, paid by the States to TSA, will be reduced to \$12 – an immediate saving for those States not registered for GST (all except SA and WA) and neutral for those that are registered.
- We can adjust our accounting treatment of income and expenses if necessary when States host the Australian Championships, to ensure that neither the State nor TSA breaches the GST threshold.
- TSA has now registered for online banking. It will be used immediately for transfers between our operating account and our online saver interest-bearing account. This enables us to maximise interest received. We plan to present a constitution change at the next AGM (January 2013) to allow external payments using internet banking

## **“Pay for play” pilot study in NSW and ACT**

- The pilot is proceeding according to plan, although there have been some implementation problems generated by some negative reaction.
- Most of the participating events have experienced good entry numbers compared to previous years. We have embarked on an e-communication and marketing campaign for events, and also used the TNSW “On the Rise” email newsletter for promotion purposes. The assistance and support of Jackson Hills and his team at Tennis NSW has been invaluable in this exercise, as has been that of Ian King from TSNSW.
- Understandably there have been complaints about the system, mostly from regular event players who in total may end up paying more over a year under a user pay arrangement, even though they are paying a zero seniors membership fee under the pilot. As we refine the pilot we will try to accommodate these comments.

- One point I wish to stress is that the proceeds to TSA of the user pay system will not be used to fund our elite overseas players, as virtually every complaint I have seen has suggested. TA has given us a commitment in this regard - that they will continue to fund our international teams.

## **Tasmania**

- As you may recall, Tennis Seniors Tasmania voted to disband and to be incorporated into and administered by, Tennis Tasmania (TT).
- When in Tasmania last month, I also spent considerable time with TT discussing this incorporation exercise. Andrew Youl has undertaken to meet with a seniors advisory group soon, to formalise the mechanics of how this arrangement will work, and the “rules” around which seniors in Tasmania will continue to be part of the seniors family. This will include how they will continue to participate in our events and Australian teams, their voting rights at AGM’s and the basis on which their seniors membership will be managed and funded.

## **Planning for the future**

- At our last Executive meeting, we discussed the desirability of updating our previous business plan now that we are established as a team. We think members have a right to know where we are headed and how we intend to get there. We will work on this in coming months.
- In the interim, and because of current pressing issues to do with declining membership and participation numbers, the Executive has produced a Marketing and Communications Strategy plan for the year ahead, prepared with the assistance of Sue Woodward, a NSW member and Marketing Consultant, whose help we gratefully acknowledge. This plan is currently being discussed with TA because it needs their support and assistance, and once it is approved, it will be published on the website.
- Essentially, it incorporates three campaigns focusing on the themes “Return to the game you love” and “You don’t have to be good, just play tennis”:
  - “Pay for play” pilot – hard and soft copy promotional material, some website enhancements, possible use of Facebook, and an events brochure
  - Australian Teams Carnival and Individual Championships – hard and soft copy informative brochure for domestic and international promotion, possible leverage of TA database of coaches, posters, electronic direct mail, create an event on Facebook
  - Membership and participation campaign – run as a trial in one or two States, e-communication with follow up processes in place.

## **Conclusion**

At the AGM I gave a commitment that we would work hard to make progress, and we hope you will agree that we have been busy these last three months! While this update may be somewhat lengthy, we would rather be accused of over-communicating than under-communicating. We will continue to keep you informed of our work in the interests of seniors tennis.

**Reg Trevaskis, President**

**On behalf of the Executive, Tennis Seniors Australia**

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