

24 February 2015

PRESIDENTS REPORT February 2014—February 2015

Reflecting upon this initial term as President of the Port Augusta Tennis Association my first thought turns to how quickly it passed by. At the same time I am thankful that there were no major hiccups and I believe that some significant small steps have been made towards ensuring tennis remains a viable sport in our city.

I would like initially to take the opportunity to thank a number of people for their support and hard work this year. In mentioning many—I am referring to both our present Winter & Twilight teams together with our Junior competitions.

- 1) The players - to all players who participated in either on a regular or occasional basis. In general there was good competitive spirit, people were willing to help in many different ways and this remains the strength of our Association. I also have appreciated the many comments and suggestions towards improving our Association.
- 2) The captains—to all captains of each team—who probably have times where they need to pull their hair out, trying to keep a team on the court. They are the ones who have put their hands up and have demonstrated that they are prepared to make a commitment to our sport and your efforts in this area are greatly appreciated.
- 3) The Junior Committee—who have once again put their hands up and have worked hard to ensure that we have a good number of young people playing the game and learning in a careful considerate manner. Their efforts this last year have been phenomenal and I also thank the parents of the children playing for their support as well.
- 4) Karl Martin - Karl has been a man possessed this year and has tirelessly strived to improving the viability and sustainability of our Association. He has almost single-handedly driven our way forward coordinated and arranged the technical details relating to our proposal to our part within the Port Augusta sporting community and the formulation of a Management Plan
- 5) Treasurer - Neil Finlay was probably ready for a spell in his own mind—however I am truly thankful he has remained on board and managed our finances once again to a high standard. Having someone of his calibre put his hand up to help certainly makes our jobs easier.
- 6) David Wauchope - Another stalwart who is like Berger Paints—He “keeps on keeping on!”. David has been there, week in, week out as well—keeping the bar stocked, working all day and evening, setting up, packing up and cleaning up—all with a smile. It makes the day to day running a pleasure.

- 7) Bruno Carcuro—the big fella has our tennis best interests deep at heart and has been a rock all year. He has put up his hand many times—the big jobs, the little jobs. We have had many long discussions and debated over many areas where we would like to improve things— over what would be the best outcome for everyone. Many suggestions and ideas were hatched from our discussions — some ideas as simple as pies and pasties & pizzas, to complex drawings about clubhouse and court design, and the dreaded Association Constitution!

I believe we are swiftly heading to a challenging and interesting stage. It has almost unanimously agreed that our long term future prospects of sustainability will be enhanced significantly by floodlighting our courts and moving our regular winter competition to a summer based one. We believe that the main benefits will be—(not in any order of importance)

- bring our adult competition into line with our junior competition with the aim of getting more juniors to join in or a natural transition to the senior competition,
- the ability to extend our season length and playing times of our twilight competition,
- the possibility to enable many more people to participate with less clashes with existing winter sports such as football and netball
- Avoid a lot of the summers damaging heat with night competitions.
- Align ourselves with most of the other tennis associations in the area who have successful competitions on a similar basis.

The challenge I see is— how we move further on this goal. We are heading towards that crossroad where decisions need to be made. If we go down this path—what days/times would the competition be played. Eg one of the popular suggestions is to move to a Friday night summer competition. This, we believe, will be more popular and enable people to have the rest of the weekend free for the many family and social options that appear. The next question of course is— is that the right night? What about the existing Twilight competition—should that be moved to perhaps a Tuesday night or would people be very happy to play 2 nights in a row? Whatever way you think or look at it—a decision will need to be made & they are big decisions that affect everybody playing. I implore all existing clubs and players to CARE about it and get involved and help that decision be made.

Another thought I had recently was with regard to facing the possibility that we wont be able to have lights installed for the start of next summer (for whatever reason—no grant, not enough funds etc) Could there still be a move to a summer format—without lights? Could it be done with shortened matches or timed games? If we truly believe that a move to summer based will enhance our Association—maybe this could or should be done sooner?

Some of the challenges we face are

- Knowing and factoring in that a high percentage of our players are no longer the champion spring chickens of the past!, (though we encourage you to keep going as long as you can though! You are wanted and appreciated and needed as much as everyone else)
- That our present club system is not as strong (in terms of numbers) as it used to be, (Maybe there is a better system somewhere?)
- That people are seemingly more “time poor” with so many entertainment options, changing workplaces and work times, lifestyles are busier. (not everyone wants to or is able to commit to being a “named” player and are suited best to filling in occasionally. We need to find ways to help and accommodate those as well)

- Recognising that our present level of fee structures is not at a realistic level that will cover our expenses and allow for making some much needed improvements to our courts and clubhouse in future seasons. (What is the fairest, best way to implement any playing fee or membership change, that will provide the expected revenue stream and without discouraging people from participating)

If everyone is happy for me to continue in my role—one of my main aims in the next term is to seek to establish a more regular meeting Management Committee that may perhaps meet once a month (all year round) and be able to work through and make those types of decisions. I envisage that this Management team to be comprised of our existing delegates structure as per our constitution.

As our Secretary Bruno can attest—I am often (maybe arguably too much!) wanting to change or examine more closely whether there is an easier, simpler or more beneficial way of doing things. (I can tell you we won't be tearing apart or folding any raffle books again!!) Part of my fear of this is related to the “that's the way we've always done it” mentality which we are all often drawn to. I attach an article below that I've had in my little collection for anyone interested to digest. I apologise if you've seen it all before as it isn't anything new!

In closing I wish all teams and players the very best for the forthcoming year and ask for your continued support.



Michael Rowbottom 24/02/2015

That's The Way We've Always Done It.

Start with a cage containing five monkeys. Inside the cage, hang a banana on a string and place a set of stairs under it. Before long, a monkey will go to the stairs and start to climb towards the bananas. As soon as he touches the stairs, spray all the monkeys with cold water.

After a while, another monkey makes an attempt with the same result - again all the monkeys are sprayed with cold water. This continues until pretty soon whenever another monkey tries to climb the stairs all the other monkeys will try to prevent it.

Now put away the cold water. Remove one of the monkeys from the cage and replace it with a new one. The new monkey will see the banana will attempt to climb the stairs. To his surprise and horror all the other monkeys attack him. After another attempt, and attack, he knows that if he climbs the stairs he will be assaulted.

Next remove another of the original five monkeys and replace it with new one. The newcomer takes part in the punishment with enthusiasm! Like wise replace third original monkey with a new one, then a fourth and a fifth. Every time a new monkey takes to the stairs it is attacked. The monkeys that are beating him have no idea why they were not permitted to climb the stairs or why they are participating in the beating of the newest monkey.

After replacing all the original monkeys, none of the remaining monkeys have ever been sprayed with cold water. Nevertheless no monkey ever again approaches the stairs to try for the bananas. Why not? Because as far as they know that's the way we've always done it around here. We call this TTWWADI or That's The Way We've Always Done It.