

# Instant Update

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**To: ALL WSF MEMBER NATIONAL FEDERATIONS**

**cc: WSF Regional Vice-Presidents, WSF Committee Members, WISPA, PSA, Accredited Companies**

## **WSF Management Committee Meeting:**

A meeting was held in Singapore 6th and 7th February. The main item for discussion was a **WSF Strategic Plan**. A paper was presented by Vice-Presidents Gerard DeCourcy and Frank van Loon at the request of President Ramachandran. Topics included the two areas identified by the IOC as requiring strengthening by the WSF, Development and the Visual Image of Squash. The approved plan now goes to all ExCo members for comment and the final document will then be published. Meantime planning for implementation of the key areas must start and ManCom recognised that it is likely that professional assistance will be required in some areas.

Also very much high on the Agenda was the **WSF Refereeing Programme**. A detailed report was presented by Vice President Chris Stahl following upon a thorough investigation. Some significant changes are proposed and will be published once all Members of the WSF Referees & Rules Committee have commented. Above all else ManCom recognises the need to increase the number of top level referees. Recent retirements have left our numbers low, and with respect to current WRs in particular, the average age is a matter of some concern! To become a top level referee, it is not just a matter of knowledge of the rules and their interpretation, it is also an understanding of the playing of the game, empathy with players and, perhaps above all else, a strong mental resilience. WSF now needs Member Nations, Regional Federations, PSA and WISPA to identify suitable candidates who might make competent, confident referees. Funding as ever is a problem - for Members getting Government aid there may be funds available for the training and developing of officials at suitable events. WSF for its part will increase the budget available for assessments and, perhaps even more important, mentoring support.

**WSF Finances** - ManCom are most grateful to the many Member Nations who have paid Membership Fees so quickly this year. This has helped our cash flow a great deal. With strict control on expenditure we are confident of making a good start this year to rebuilding our reserves and thereafter starting to build up a fund for the 2013 Olympic Bid Campaign rather than having a last minute appeal for funds as in 2009 - unsatisfactory. We remain uncertain as to when we might be able to afford to appoint a Chief Executive but do recognise that, in the meantime, some specialist contracted work may be required to help us fulfil some important aims.

## **Championship News**

Entries are still invited for the World Women's Team Championships in New Zealand, closing end of this month though. Entry forms for both Junior Individual Championships will be distributed as available shortly. World Masters 2010 – see [worldmasters2010.squash-events.de](http://worldmasters2010.squash-events.de).

## **South Asia Games**

The recently held South Asian Games offered local squash enthusiasts in Bangladesh an opportunity to watch some of the best in the game and even cheer on their own against those great players. Pakistan, as expected, rolled through the competition but there were many surprises as well.

The biggest surprise of all came from the host country who emerged as a new contender in regional play and hosted an international squash event for the first time ever. Both individual entries from Bangladesh, Masud Rana and Shopon Pervez, moved on to the second round where they faced top seeds and eventual medallists



Farhan Mehboob (above left, silver medallist) and Aamir Atlas Khan (above, right, gold medallist). With extensive local and international media coverage daily and a live telecast of the Gold Medal final, many people were exposed to squash and its spectator friendly action from some of the world's best players.

But even more important is what is happening off court. The Bangladesh Squash Rackets Federation flew in Dato' Sani Karim, Asian Squash Federation (ASF) President, to facilitate meetings regarding the promotion and the growth of squash in Bangladesh. Dato' Karim met with Ministers of Bangladesh, some of which were former squash players whom announced their support for - and practical assistance with – Bangladesh Squash Rackets Federation's (BSRF) first ever property and squash specific facility. Dato' Karim went on to share lessons learned from his experiences leading both Malaysia Squash and the region's governing body, the ASF, and how BSRF can build off those experiences. The BSRF is now prepared to move forward with its first ever season of squash and the introduction of its strategic plan.

While the South Asian Games presented a platform whereby Pakistan dominated (Gold and Silver in Individual, Gold in team) yet again, one can only think of the future and those same participating nations like Bangladesh taking great strides to closing the gap. India has made substantial progress and is maintaining high seedings and great results in its junior ranks while also having a handful of highly ranked professional players. Sri Lanka has laid a solid foundation with their classy professional, Navin Samarasinghe, who is leading the way for future players. Nepal has invested in more courts and is looking to host more tournaments, creating more opportunities for people to jump in this fun sport.

In all, Pakistan performed well, but if they are to stay atop the South Asian Games, they will have to work harder in the coming years, because that is exactly what their competition is doing.

#### **Individual Event**

Gold - Aamir Atlas Khan (PAK)

Silver- Farhan Mehboob (PAK)

Bronze - Sandeep Jangra (IND)

Bronze - Gaurav Nandrajog (IND)

#### **Team Event**

Gold - Pakistan

Silver - India

Bronze - Sri Lanka

Bronze – Bangladesh

### **Rules**

Definitions in the Rules of Squash for "Game" have been changed - see the WSF Website for details.

### **Player News**

In a sensational climax to the **Tecnifibre British Junior Open**, the prestigious **European Squash Federation Junior Circuit Gold Event** staged in January in the English city of Sheffield, **Egypt** claimed all eight titles (from U13 to U19) for the first time in the history of the tournament ..... By winning the **Delaware State Open** on home soil this month, US teenager **Amanda Sobhy** equalled the record achieved by Malaysia's **Nicol David** in 2000 by becoming only the second player in the history of the **WISPA World Tour** to win two titles as a 16-year-old ....