

## **THE RUGBY FIVES ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

### **General Secretary's Report 2004-5**

Whilst the emphasis last year was on administrative matters following our incorporation, the Board this year was able to devote more of its time to marketing and development issues. Many of you will have read in the mid-season review that, after extensive discussions with the Eton Fives Association, we formed a joint Federation with them with the principal objective of promoting and developing the game of Fives in all its versions, both in the UK and overseas. The respective Boards will retain full control of such issues as strategy, rules, championships/matches, quality of courts etc but we considered that the combined membership of both sports would be more attractive to potential sponsors, advertisers and National bodies. One of the main issues currently under discussion at the Federation is the creation of a cohesive PR strategy which is fundamental to heightening the profile of the game of Fives. As also mentioned in the review, we are still in discussion with our potential publishers for a book on the history of Fives with the intended publication date of 2007 to coincide with our 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Much work will need to be done in the early stages to create a viable and extensive database to which we can market the proposed book and to gauge whether there is indeed a sufficient market for the book before we commit significant funds to the project.

Following much work by Paddy d'Ancona and his sub-committee, together with professional support from an external design company, our 'new' website was launched in March with much positive feedback from our users. The Board considered that the cost of this exercise was money well spent and that the previous site was not sustainable, particularly as we seek to heighten the profile of our game.

Following on from the assistance provided by the Charitable Trust to both Denstone School and Derby Moor last season, the Board was delighted that the Trust was able to assist Clifton College with the renovation of two of their courts at the Music School site, thereby creating an excellent centre of four courts. Not only has this provided improved facilities for the College, it has also facilitated the regeneration of the West of England Club which is now a thriving entity. Some smaller projects are currently in the early stages of consideration and we watch with interest the potential developments at both Oundle and Christ's Hospital, whilst continuing to monitor the situation at Sutton Valence.

In terms of publications, the Handbook and mid-season review continue to be well received by members and this year we produced an up-dated version of the Record book.

Competitions continue to be very well attended and this season we had record entries for the British Universities Championships and the highest number of participants in the National Singles since 1991. The latter produced a new champion in Matt Cavanagh and overall it is extremely encouraging to see such a good number of younger players coming through at such a high standard. This was equally true of the Schools Championships this year with the Singles being won by Jamie Pendergrass from Loretto, who looks a very exciting prospect for the future.

On the administrative side, approximately 75% of the letters of guarantee have now been returned and the Board was pleased with the response to the revised standing order mandate exercise with approximately 80% being returned so far by members who pay in this way.

Finally, we say farewell to three Board members this year – Geoff Sherratt, Bob Dolby and Johnny Nelmes – the Board wishes to record its thanks to all three individuals for their contributions over the last few years.

Ian Fuller, May 2005