

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The buzz of the year was created on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2005 in Singapore when Jacques Rogge announced the successful candidature of London as the venue for the 2012 Olympics. There was an immediate anticipation that British Volleyball teams, with English players would be competing in the Olympics for the first time on home soil, TeamGB would be represented in Beach Volleyball after an absence of 16 years, and a sitting volleyball team would be participating in the Paralympics.

What interested many volleyballers was the inspirational message to youth in the run-up to the Games and the legacy afforded by hosting the Olympics. The issues of generating participation, of getting and retaining involvement of volunteers – be they young or old, the development of coaching plans and having more active coaches in more accredited clubs, remained at the forefront of EVA thinking. EVA strategy was directed by the Whole Sport Plan, though slightly deflected by the Olympic vision. The latter gave focus to the reenergising of the British Volleyball Federation which will be responsible for the High Performance programmes for the next 6 years.

With increased Sport England grant of £350,000 the EVA could recruit and realign staff to create a Development Team, comprising the Whole Sport Plan Manager, and individual officers for PESCCCL (PE in Schools and Community Club links), Workforce Development, Club Development and Coach Education and Development. The team finally came together as a fully staffed unit in May 2006.

The WSP target of increased participation and membership, especially at school level, has been met, as has the 6% increase in registered coaches. The target for accredited clubs was 10, and by the year end six clubs had achieved accreditation with another four on the brink. These represented the 'Start' and 'Stay' criteria. The measures for the 'Succeed' level were met with seven English players in overseas clubs and the dominance of England Senior Men and Women against Scotland in the December internationals. The regional development programme for younger players continued and help came from SportsAid to talented young players and from the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme for Beach players.

Volleyball is included in a variety of national programmes – PESSCL, Step into Sport, Community Coaches and soon the competition managers' scheme in pilot areas. Links with several County Sports partnerships proved to be invaluable. Volleysport and MiniVolley cards, Volley 1-2-3 Club accreditation and the EVA child welfare policy were promoted. Progress with the UK Coaching Certificate was slower, reliant on funding and co-operation with the other Home Nations.

A main challenge for the Association was the roll-out of the WSP on a national basis, engaging regional, county and areas associations. The lack of a functioning Regional Commission seriously retarded this process and this issue is a priority to be addressed in the current year. Other Commissions continued, all trying to tap into what could be a shrinking volunteer market. As one Commission President remarked the years of financial drought were marked by a sufficiency of volunteers, now there is dearth of volunteers at higher levels when finance has been made available. Workforce Development is a key and the best results will come from an engagement of an army of volunteers with what, in National Governing Body terms, is still a relatively small staffed organisation. Unlike other sports the EVA does not have paid Regional Officers to act as a conduit.

New faces on the Executive Board included Richard Callicott as President and Richard Dobell as the Playing Director. The other Directors retained their existing portfolios. Commission Presidents included the 'old' and the 'new' - Bernard Kilkenny (Referees), Richard Harrison (Coaches), Ade McGraa (Competitions), Bob Matthews (Schools and Junior Development), Steve Williams (Performance) and Mark Kontopoulos (Beach). As mentioned above the post of Regional Commission President remained unfilled.

Competition outlets were maintained with a range of National competitions with the Prosport Cup Finals being held for the first time at the EIS Sheffield, used previously for the World Championships first round in January 2005. Thanks go to Sheffield Events Unit and staff at the EIS for their help. The reward was a full house for both days of the finals, an encouraging marker for the future.

A significant move forward in the year was the new website which included features of on-line registration, e-commerce, and a much improved visible face for all site visitors. The site has attracted favourable comment and much traffic. The value of good communications has been recognised by the Board and a Communications and Promotions Officer was appointed at the end of the year. The

establishment of better communications, linked with the web site, and the increased profile afforded by the Olympic dream will hopefully start to attract commercial activity, which to date has remained limited. However, the participatory and spectator base has to be improved and ensuring that our product matches expectations. One of our best communication channels, 3 Touch, continued on a regular bi-monthly basis thanks to the efforts of Barbara Totterdell and Douglas Barr-Hamilton.

On the International front England Men and Women were invited by the FIVB to participate in the African Gala, the women recording a notable victory against hosts Nigeria. The Men's progress in the World Championships was halted in the second round in the Czech Republic. The annual Anglo-Scots internationals in December resulted in a 6-0 whitewash of Scotland. The Senior Women hosted Norway and Iceland. Competitive outlets for the Juniors were provided in the Nordic Championships and the cadets had their annual excursion abroad. The only international activity in Beach Volleyball was provided by our Californian based women's pairing who finished fourth in an FIVB Challenger event. Sheffield and Loughborough continued to host the National Development squads and the National teams used Ashcombe and Heyford, the latter thanks to the BOA, as training bases.

After years of struggling financially, the Association has built up its reserves, thanks to the efforts of the financial team of Richard Smith and Chris Inman. In the forthcoming years the challenge will be one of ensuring that a multiplier effect is created which benefits all the initiatives of the WSP. At the same time commercial income must be derived which can benefit the sport.

The EVA was represented at the CEV Congress, on the BVF (British Volleyball Federation), the CCPR (Central Council of Physical Recreation) and at meetings of other sporting bodies.

My thanks go to Phil Veasey, our client manager at Sport England, the Board Directors, Commission Presidents and all those who ceaselessly and selflessly act as volunteers throughout the year. I am not sure how volleyball can repay the debt of gratitude. The Office continues to function as a support centre for a range of people – not only the Board and Commissions, Coaches and Referees, but also players, teams, clubs and volunteers as well as external parties.

The Loughborough HQ is shared with GB Wheelchair Basketball and British Judo and though a good working environment at the heart of sport, the full complement of staffing has resulted in space being at a premium.

Finance Manager - Chris Inman

Office Manager - Martin Lindsey

WSP Manager - Craig Handford

Partnerships PESCCL Officer - Will Roberts

Workforce Development Officer – Joanne Richards (Kelly Knowles left February 2006).

Club Development Officer – Laura Brown

Events and Competitions Officer – Gemma Nunnerley

Communications and Promotions – Rebecca Lee

Administrators - Jayne Hughes, Rebecca Hand and Tricia Brooks

**Toomas Ojasoo,**  
**Chief Executive Officer**