

## **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

2004-2005 'A year of preparation for the Whole Sport Plan' following the opportunity given us by Sport England to make an impact as a development sport, to embrace the 'Game Plan for Sport' and to show how, as a smaller National Governing Body, we could make a difference.

The EVA took the opportunity to consult with members, to discover more about itself both internally and from independent sources and to cement improving relations with Sport England. Interim funding enabled commissioning valuable research on an audit of participation, on a marketing and commercial overview and on Board roles vis-à-vis the Office. The funding also provided for a PESCCCL Officer (PE in Schools and Community Club links) Jemma Green; Workforce Development Officer - Kelly Knowles and a co-ordinator of the Whole Sport Plan submission - Janet Inman.

The WSP distilled our proposed ambitions for the next four years into a few measurable KPIs (Key Performance Indicators). As a 'Start' and 'Stay' sport these include an increase in participation, more accredited clubs, a larger cadre of more active coaches and more volunteers. Increasing the number of players playing at a professional level is the indicator at the 'Succeed' level.

To achieve these Volleyball is included in a variety of programmes - PESCCCL, SIS (Step into Sport), Community Coach Scheme, UKCC (UK Coaching Certificate), SportsAid, and hopefully, in the future, TASS (Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme). Development activities such as Volleysport card training and the regional development programme continued, with promotion of Volley 1-2-3 Club accreditation, the child welfare policy as well as helping with Awards for All bids.

The annual Exchequer grant remained constant at £208,000. Under the direction of Richard Smith, Finance Director, and with the sterling efforts of the Finance Officer, financial stability was ensured for yet another year. The grant increase to £350,000 provides a stiff challenge, in that, to date, the EVA has been obliged to derive an equivalent amount of income from its own efforts as provided by the grant. This will require more commercial activity to avoid an extra burden falling on the membership and participants.

Hosting the 1<sup>st</sup> round of the FIVB World Championships gave an unplanned boost to the profile of Volleyball in this country. Thanks go to volunteers, Sheffield Events Unit and staff at the EIS for their help to overcome the organisational tasks and associated difficulties in this new venture. The rewards were a full house for the Anglo-Scots clashes, victories for England, television coverage and articles in the general media and volleyball press, both at home and abroad. Encouraging attendances were also evident at the National Finals hosted for the first time at Loughborough.

Such prestigious tournaments could not, however, loosen the purse strings of potential sponsors and advertisers. Partnerships were few and of a small nature, reflecting a lack of product or a sufficiently large participatory and spectator base. An exception to this was the Prosport sponsorship of grass roots development, which attracted Sportmatch funding, and enabled the production of rules and cards for small sided games and some competitions. Commercial activity remains a difficult area to be addressed by a concerted effort to strengthen our product and gain more exposure for it.

3Touch continued on a regular bi-monthly basis thanks to the efforts of Barbara Totterdell and Douglas Barr-Hamilton. This publication along with the website is the public face of volleyball. The Board agreed plans for a new database linked website, with online registration and 'shopping' features.

Aside from advancing to round 2 of the WCs, the Men's team won the resurrected British Championships and had Spring Cup wins over Latvia and Austria to finish 8<sup>th</sup>. The Women won the Novotel Cup and emulated their male counterparts to continue success against Scotland. There was no international activity in Beach Volleyball and the domestic scene constituted a number of independently organised tournaments. Sheffield and Loughborough continued to host the National Development squads and the National teams used Ashcombe and Heyford, thanks to the BOA, as training bases.

The Executive Board welcomed a new face, Lenny Barry as the Playing Director, while some Directors took new portfolios. Janet Inman, stood down as Development Director to concentrate on her new role, and no suitable replacement was found. New Commission Presidents elected were Ade McGraa and Frances White for Competitions and Regional respectively. During the year Steve Williams was co-opted to Performance and Mark Kontopoulos to Beach. Experience was retained in Referees (Bernard Kilkenny) and Coaches (Richard Harrison) with Charlie Orton relinquishing his Competitions role but staying on as web-master. There were still gaps and vacancies within some Commissions, a sign of finding already overloaded volunteers to take on more work, an issue of high priority.

This may also be reflected in the differences in affiliation across the country. The affiliation figures, produced elsewhere, show that over half the Senior clubs come from the South West and South East Regions; that only 10% come from the three northern regions; that there are no affiliated junior clubs in Yorkshire and precious few elsewhere, except the East Midlands and South West. The onerous part of running a club with few rewards is a priority to be tackled in 2005.

The EVA was represented at the CEV Congress, on the BVF (British Volleyball Federation) and at meetings of other bodies.

The HQ, shared with British Judo and GB Wheelchair Basketball in Loughborough, at the heart of sport, proved to be a beneficial working environment. There were some staff changes. Julie Smith moved to the Loughborough EIS and Will Roberts took over some Youth Development Officer roles on a part-time basis. Martin Lindsey and myself provided full-time cover with Chris Inman, Jayne Hughes (Admin Asst) and Craig Handford (Technical Officer) on a part-time basis. Extra casual cover was provided by University students. The Office continues to function as a support centre for a range of people – the Board, Commissions, Coaches and Referees, players, teams, clubs and a host of others.

My thanks go to many people, including Phil Veasey, our client manager at Sport England, and to 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.

**Toomas Ojasoo**