

VICE PRESIDENT

Well so much for my intention to step down at last year's AGM.

I was persuaded to remain and assist in the Whole Sport Plan (WSP) bidding process and support the new President, Stewart Dunne.

This has been a challenging year. Not just for the tremendous efforts required by many people in delivering to Sport England (SE) a well thought out and innovative WSP application, but in calming troubled waters towards the end of an interesting National Volleyball League (NVL) programme.

Threats of litigation don't improve the digestion or assist in determining the most equitable solution to matters of NVL competition rule interpretations.

One lesson to be learned from all of this must be that we are a small amateur sport, being administered by a small group of dedicated amateurs, who do their best at the end of demanding professional day jobs and to threaten those very people with court action does none of those involved any credit and I would urge anyone contemplating such actions in the future, to stand back and for goodness sake try and see the bigger picture and dare I say it examine their real motives and have a long hard look at themselves.

The depressing result of the unrest and upheaval is that we have lost one of volleyball's most respected amateur officers, not just respected in England, but all over the world. Someone whose reputation for integrity you could only dream of emulating.

There are lessons for us all, but we must move forward, so let's try and devote all our energies towards growing volleyball, a sport we all love, and try and leave the selfishness and over inflated egos at home.

We have an enormous opportunity to develop our base using the new Whole Sport Plan approved and funded by Sport England. Regions, local leagues and area associations can initiate grass roots expansion – this is a huge possibility and with the help and assistance of the centre this can be a reality. We are putting the professional staff in place to help you help yourselves – contact the Office in Loughborough and put volleyball at the front of your community.

Make 2005/2006 our new beginning.

Brian Stalker