



Final Version

17 February, 2009

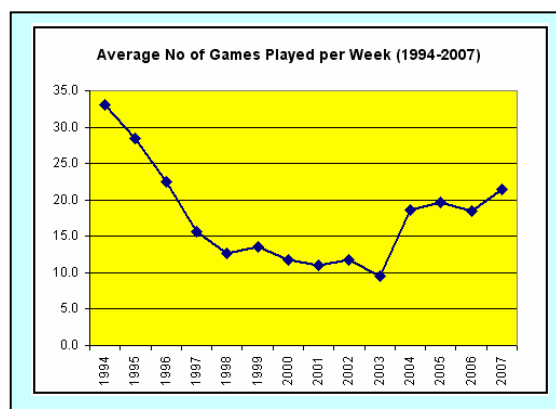
Squash Section Contribution to Business Plan Report for Ups and pH Management Committee.

Analysis of Period 1994-2007: Report Prepared Steve Edwards (Squash Section Chairman).

Summary

A few key points are noted here mainly for the period **1994-2007**. 2007 is the last year for which we have complete data.

- **513** playing members since 1994.
- Weekly average number of games played = **19.5**.
- Around **40 people** using the court weekly.
- Average annual number of members in Squash Section over recent years = **70**.
- Average number of new members annually estimated at **25**.
- Coached around **200** people in the analysis period.
- Average of **10** complete beginners coached per year.
- The Squash Section is in a **healthy** phase of its history, with usage on the **increase** as shown by the weekly booking plot opposite.



The report goes on to give full details in the following areas:

Background, mission, membership, usage, usage by affiliation and employer (ICR / RMH), finance, coaching and future plans.

Background



The Ups Club Squash Section came into existence around 1974. Records are scarce, but it is believed that Ups Club members raised money to finance the purchase and erection of the current Banbury style squash court.

More information about the Squash Section is available via the web pages hosted by the Institute of Cancer Research: http://intra.icr.ac.uk/upsdowns/_squash.htm.

Mission

Our mission as stated in our constitution is:

- To provide the best possible facility to play squash in. Paying particular attention to the upkeep of the premises and playing area, along with encouraging active participation in the sport in the safest possible way. With regard to players safety, the section is aware that not all eventualities can be foreseen, so the Squash Section has always recognised and publicised that players play the game at their own risk.
- To allow people to meet and compete in a sport that is supported by the employers (Institute of Cancer Research and Royal Marsden Hospital) for the wellbeing of its employees.
- To encourage more people to participate in the sport through publicising the facility and running coaching classes.

[Source: from squash web pages: http://intra.icr.ac.uk/upsdowns/_sq_constitution.htm]

Membership

Full membership details from 1974 are still in preparation. However complete analysis has been conducted from **1994 to 2007** inclusive. This 14 year period is fairly representative of activity in the section since its inception, and should hopefully be sufficient for the purposes of the current Ups Club Business Plan submission to the ICR and RMH. However people can remember times when there was a queue of people waiting outside in order to book a court for the next day. Hopefully this will be illustrated in the 'Usage' section.

- In this 14 year period the records show that there were on **average** around **80** active playing members using the court annually. Over the last four years this figure is nearer **70**.
- Since 1994 we have recorded **513 members** who have at one time or another used the squash facility. This tallies with the aforementioned annual average, whereby there is a core of around 40-50 people that are retained each year and 20-30 newcomers who join. The numbers were far higher in the early and mid 1990's - see Appendix 1.
- With regard to the split of players by affiliation, a provisional analysis of the 513 members is shown in Table 1a.

	RMH	ICR	Associate Memb. or External	Unknown	Total
Full Count	83	265	35	130	513
Known Affiliation	83	265	35	-	383
Percentage	21.7%	69.2%	9.1%		100.0%

- The section believes that there is a strong likelihood that a good fraction of the 'unknown affiliated' players were RMH staff and also a high likelihood that a fair proportion are ex-staff or external players. This could therefore incur a reporting bias as most of the committee have been ICR based and therefore know their respective affiliated players. So the proportion of known RMH players is likely to be slightly higher than the **21.7%** cited for the 14 year period.

- However by looking at the last 4 years of records (Table 1b), which will be common practice in the rest of this document, a different picture emerges because of the availability of a fuller data set. This new picture is probably more reflective of the true usage picture, and highlights the fact that there is little doubt that far fewer RMH staff use the squash court (**15.2%**).

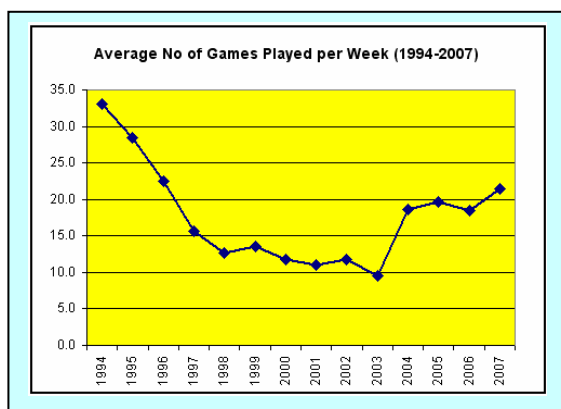
Table 1b: Sub analysis; Last 4 years inclusive (2004-2007)					
	RMH	ICR	Associate Memb. or External	Unknown	Total
Full Count	25	136	3	14	178
Known Affiliation	25	136	3	-	164
Percentage	15.2%	83.0%	1.8%		100.0%

- The reduction in doubt about usage shown in Table 1b is due to the fact that the fraction of 'unknown' affiliated players is significantly lower than in the former 14 year analysis. The proportion is lower because we decided to maintain far better records when the Ups & Downs Club decided to focus membership on just working employees (Corporate Membership). It is extremely noteworthy that in the 4 year analysis, only three known associate/family members used the court - one of which is our squash coach ! This really highlights the fact that very few ex-staff have been using court since 2003. The second reason for recording usage was that the Squash Section was concerned about use of the court by non-members. In addition some players were playing racquet ball which we thought was damaging the out of court cladding boards. The section therefore had a concerted attempt to monitor usage. Some known non-members were discouraged to attend and this may have led to a decline in the 'unknown' category of user. In addition, to our knowledge, there have been only been two concerted attempts at thefts of money from our coin operated meter in the last 20 years. Although these were in the late 90's, this also influenced our decision for increased vigilance.

Usage

The court is usually booked in 'slots' lasting 40 mins. A booking sheet for weekdays is displayed in the court foyer and a court can be booked with a booking sticker (see 'Finance' section) no more than one week in advance.

Historically we have termed the slots at lunchtime and early evening as 'peak' slots. There are 15 such slots at lunchtime (11:50 - 13:50hrs) and 15 in the evening (16:50 - 18:50hrs). Pre 2003 there we 20 lunchtime peak slots.



Full usage analysis is shown in Appendix 1. Over the 14 year analysis period (1994-2007 incl.) there were on average **17.7 bookings** per week made by members Individual annual data is shown in the plot opposite.

The majority of these bookings were within the 'peak' slots (**72%**). The last 4 year trend is towards an **increase** in play with on average **19.5** slots booked per week. Not everybody books a court, so the true number of slots used may well be higher.

So a reasonable estimate of weekly usage would be **40 people** assuming two people play in the slots and accounting/correcting for people playing more than once a week (the data shows that in 2007 only

one player of 67 averaged more than one game a week). Representative data on individual usage is shown in Appendix 2.

The court was definitely busier in earlier years (as mentioned earlier) and data supports this recollection. Encouragingly however, 2007 was the first year in which we returned to play levels similar to those in the mid 1990's.

Without doubt though, the trend from 1994 has been a reduction in the number of games played and there could be many reasons for this. One possibility is that the decline is due to less RMH staff using the facility as will be suggested from certain other data in this report. Another reason might be that as a result of the Ups Club membership policy, there are less Associate and external players. In addition, people may have lost interest in squash. This is evidenced by numerous courts in the 1990's being turned into gyms or aerobics halls. And finally patterns of work may have changed and made extracurricular activities less attractive to workers and their managers !

The appendix shows the pattern in the overall decline in play since 1994, whereby it appears as if the majority of the reduction is in the use of 'non-peak' slots. I.e. players are have began to play only at peak times.

As mentioned earlier there could be many reasons for this. But an additional explanation could be a reduction in usage by shift workers. This could be an indicator of that less RMH workers attend, as they operate more shift work - unlike the ICR.

In the last 4 years we now have the highest level of 'peak' play ever seen (51, 52, 52, 59% respectively). This confirms that although there is a good recovery in play levels since 2003, the predominant trend is for this to be at lunchtime or early evening. We generally attribute our rising play levels and interest to the coaching courses that we run regularly (see later). However our squash coach has told us that there is a general resurgence in the popularity of squash, with gyms being converted back !

If we are thinking of opening up our facility to other outside groups, the data suggest that there is indeed room in the system to allow this without significantly inconveniencing current members. The court does get busy in the last week of a league month, so if we expand our membership, booking patterns might need to change accordingly ?

However it is unlikely that we will ever return to early 1990's and 1980's play levels unless we recruit significantly more RMH staff or open up the facility to more people. In those early days squash was so popular that there booking queues (as mentioned earlier) to book courts 24hrs in advance.

We haven't recorded games played on the weekends for quite a while, so people can attend and take their chances that no one is using the court. It isn't compulsory to use a booking sticker if the court is free at the time of attendance.

The Squash Section has hosted the Mini-Olympics squash event every year since its inception. The event runs for around 6 weeks every summer and includes around a dozen sports.

The section has also hosted and attended matches with local medical institutions in previous years.

Finance

The cost of a game of squash has remained the same since 1998. The booking fee (sticker) costs 50p and the compulsory charge for lighting the court is £1.00. The Squash Section Management Committee sets the costs, and reviews the situation every year at the Squash AGM.

Constitutionally the section is non-profit making. Over this analysis period, the section raises on average £1300 per annum from these charges. The last financial year on record (2007) shows that we raised £1573. Full accounts details are available on request.

The Squash Section also sells squash racquets and balls. This activity is completely cost neutral in accordance with the constitution and Ups Club insurance requirements. We also run coaching courses (see below) which are almost entirely cost neutral. Any surplus goes towards the provision of practice slots for coachees. This has been agreed by the committee.

The revenue generated from charges is spent entirely on court maintenance. Surplus revenue goes into our financial reserves. The current reserve stands at £13,000 and is kept in a secure 'high interest' account for 'Future Plans'. All transactions require the authorisation of 2 of the 4 section officers.

The Squash Section is therefore effectively self financing. We however do not currently pay for our electricity. This was initially provided by ICR from E Block up until E & F Block were demolished in 2005. The supply is now from the Downs Club distribution board, and the assumption is that the Royal Marsden now underwrite this cost. In addition we do not contribute to business rates. We are informed (Ups Management meeting 06.02.09) that these are approximately £1000 per month for the whole 'sports site' - hall, swimming pool and squash court. The section has discussed having to pay for electricity and was factored into consideration in previous Squash Section AGMs of the 1990's.

Coaching

The Squash Section has run **30 coaching courses** from 1998 to present. We have employed the services of two coaches - Ann Scambler and Ron Nye. Ron (pictured far right) is our current 'resident' coach and he is qualified to SRA level 3 (junior international level).

Over this 11 year period **218 individuals** have attended these courses. The breakdown of attendees is shown in Table 2 with the current estimate that 13% of these attendees are RMH staff and 82% ICR. The percentage of family, associate or external members that attended was 5.0%.



Table 2: Squash Coaching Attendees 1998 - 2009 (incl) by Employee or Affiliation

	RMH	ICR	Associate Memb. or External	Unknown	Total
Full Count	28	179	11	0	218
Known Affiliation	28	179	11	-	218
Percentage	12.8%	82.2%	5.0%		100.0%

The coaching is intended to give players either a complete introduction to the game (beginners) or to help existing players improve. In recent years the section has become aware of the health and safety issues associated with playing this sport. The section therefore recommends that all players attend a coaching course at some stage in their membership. The main reason for this is for the coach to show them how to play safely and to learn when to ask for 'lets', and thus prevent unnecessary injuries.

The above analysis allows us to estimate the proportion of all players that have attended coaching over the period 1998 - 2007 incl.

Approximate total members playing in period = 344

Approximate number attended coaching = 192

The attendance proportion = **55.8%**

The section feels this is a very healthy figure and indicates that our policy of trying to get a high proportion of members to attend a course is working, and is therefore endorsing our commitment to our safety aims of informing as many people as possible to squash playing safety aspects.

Using the additional 'latest 4 years analysis' (2004 - 2007 incl) (Course numbers 14-27)

Approximate total members playing in period = 180

Approximate number attended coaching = 128

The attendance proportion = **71.1%**

This shows that we are improving the ratio of coachees to non-coachees. This is a good trend and we hope it continues ! We thank Ron Nye for his wonderful enthusiastic commitment to running these courses over the last nine years.

Looking at the full 11 year coaching period, the data were analysed for the entry level of the attendees. This is shown in Table 3

Table 3: Squash Coaching - Entry Level of Attendees 1998 - 2009					
	Beginner	Novice	Improver	Intermediate	Total
Count	100	46	54	18	218
Percentage	45.8%	21.1%	24.8%	8.3%	100.0%

The analysis shows pretty much what we expected, in that the majority of attendees are new to squash as beginners. Having attended any course, a beginner is then classed as a 'novice'. The novice group shown in Table 3 will be a mixture of progressed beginners and players who have had a limited experience of squash before coming here to work. Improvers are players who have a good grounding in squash and for approximation purposes, would play up to league 3 or 4 in our section leagues (http://intra.icr.ac.uk/upsdowns/_sq_leag.htm). Intermediates will generally range from league 1-3.

The section is happy that the aims of the coaching course are being fulfilled by encouraging new players to the sport and also taking care of safety issues by specific instruction from our coach on court etiquette and safe play. The last 11 vs. 4 year analysis (2005 -2008 incl) for beginner recruitment is 45.8% and 60.6% (54/89). This again is potentially an indicator that the section is healthy and performing well at attracting new players to squash.

Future Plans

1. To increase the price of a game of squash from £1.50 to either £2.00 or £2.50. This is currently being debated by the Squash Committee. A raise of 50p has already been agreed because we recently secured our own insurance policy which costs £500 per annum. The additional 50p is under discussion as there is an argument to use more external contractors for our maintenance needs because it isn't so easy these days to recruit volunteer help for some of the major jobs that need doing.

2. Jobs that need doing:
 - New air conditioning / dehumidifier. Approximate cost on current quote £6,300.
 - Strip paint from front wall and repaint whole court. Approximate cost £3,000 - £5,000.
 - Repair and make good external roof. Approximate cost £1,000 - £3,000.
3. To improve communications and dissemination of information to members - particularly to Royal Marsden Hospital staff. See email to Squash Committee and Helen Taylor (Ups Club Chairman) 26 January 2009 (Subject: Squash Matters 26.01.09). The Squash Section has always pamphletted the Royal Marsden with information about coaching and other events, but in recent years we only pamphlet the RMH canteen and not the wards due to time constraints. We may have to re-start pamphletting all areas as has recently been announced by the Ups and pH Committee (06.02.09).
4. To promote the positive health and wellbeing benefits of playing sport to all ICR and RMH staff (including managers!).
5. To investigate provision of an additional squash court.

I leave this report for your consideration,
Yours sincerely,



Mr. Steve Edwards.
Chairman: The Ups Club Squash Section
(On behalf of The Ups Club Squash Section Management Committee)
cc Ups Club Squash Section Management Committee

Appendix 1 - Full Usage Analysis							
Year	No. of Members	Total Bookings	Average Weekly Bookings	Av. Weekly Peak Bookings	Percent of Peak Slots Used	Percent Peak of all Played	Slots used of all Slots Available
1994	116	1716*	33.0	NR	NR	NR	NR
1995	135	1482	28.5	17.3	49.4%	63.1%	25.9%
1996	134	1168	22.5	13.1	37.4%	54.5%	20.4%
1997	109	800	15.7	10.0	28.6%	59.2%	14.2%
1998	71	660	12.7	8.6	24.5%	63.6%	11.5%
1999	79	703	13.5	10.3	29.4%	71.1%	12.3%
2000	60	615	11.8	10.0	28.5%	82.0%	10.8%
2001	61	571	11.0	8.6	24.5%	75.0%	10.0%
2002	53	614	11.8	8.9	25.4%	68.0%	10.7%
2003	47	496	9.5	7.5	23.8%	72.8%	9.3%
2004	62	987	18.6	15.3	51.0%	81.4%	18.6%
2005	69	1019	19.6	15.7	52.3%	75.7%	19.6%
2006	64	958	18.4	15.6	52.0%	84.7%	17.4%
2007	67	1115	21.4	17.7	59.0%	81.8%	21.4%
2008	No data yet available for analysis						
Overall Averages	80.5	922	17.7	12.2	37.4%	71.8%	15.5%

Notes on Appendix 1

* = Annual estimate based on actual weekly usage

Halfway through 2003 'Peak' definition changed to 3 lunch slots. Up to this time there were traditionally 4 lunch slots (2 each of 30 mins) + 3 40 min evening slots. Total =35 'Peak'.

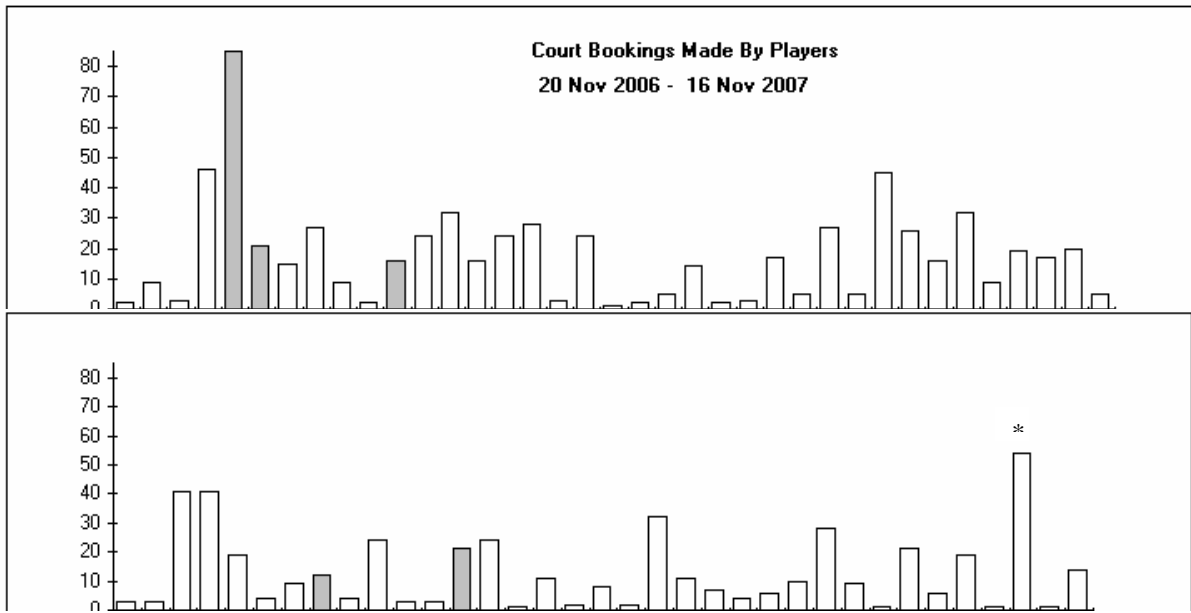
Up to 2003 total of 22 slots per day, then changed to 20 to give more time in certain slots.

NR - No records available

2004: Coaching sessions included in analysis. Also a big turn around in Peak slots used.

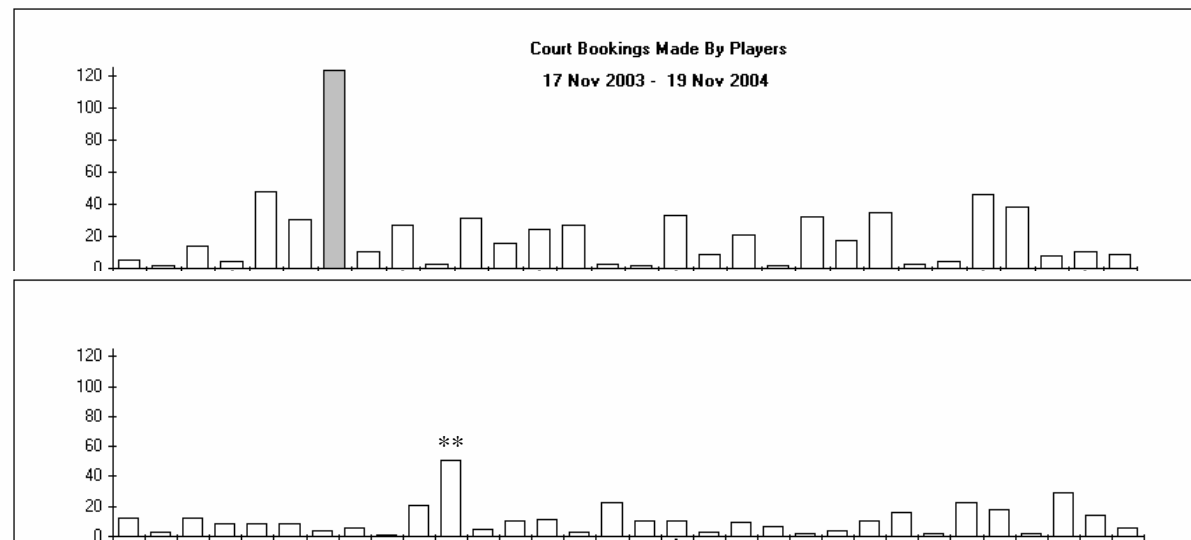
Appendix 2 - Representative Data on Individual Annual Usage

Chart of annual bookings by individuals (2007). Names removed for confidentiality.



* = Player who averaged more than 1 game per week (54).
Grey bars are coaching related, doubles evenings, Mini-Olympics or unsigned slots.

Chart of annual bookings by individuals (2004). Names removed for confidentiality.



** = Player who averaged 1 game per week (51).
Grey bar is all coaching related