

28th September 2009

Newport Squash Rackets Club enters the big time...

Newport Squash Rackets Club has been selected as the first club outside England to enter the UK's Premier Squash League competition. The club will play host to the World's top players during the course of the next 6 months.

Newport Squash Rackets Club chairman, Mark Huxtable commented, ***'this is an ideal opportunity for Newport & Wales to see home grown players compete against some of the very best talent of the Squash World'***.

He added, ***'for many years Wales has considered to be 'punching far above its weight' at International level, which is probably largely due to the comprehensive development programme lead by Squash Wales Coach and former World No.2 Chris Robertson.'***

Chris has overseen a programme which has led to the Welsh men finishing as bronze medallists at the European Championships at Under 15, Under 17, Under 19 and Senior levels in 2009. Newport's entry into the PSL will provide a further platform for this development in the run up to next year's Commonwealth Games.



Rob Sutherland in the foreground in recent action

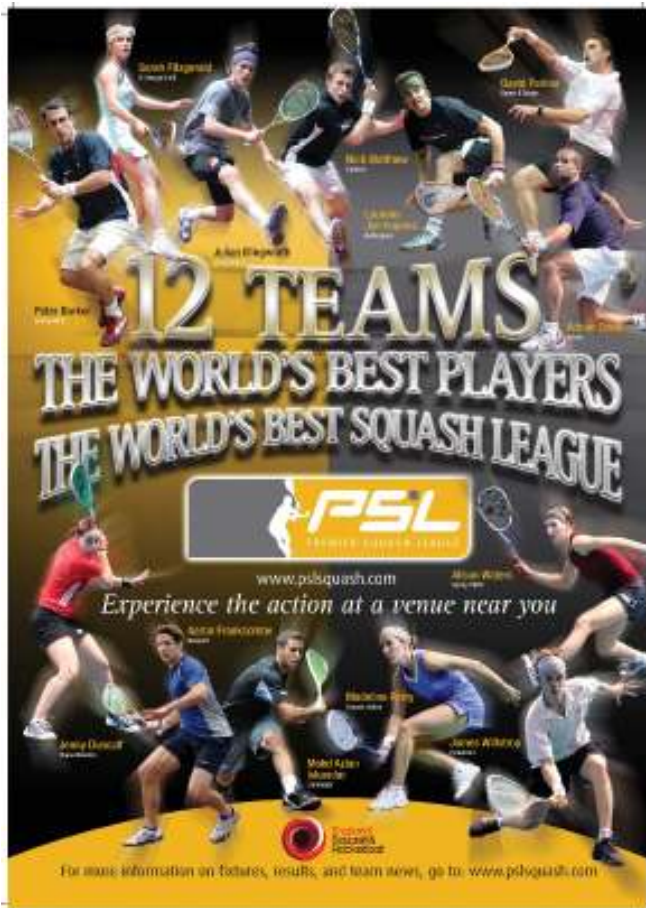
Newport Squash Rackets Club has been at its present base within Rodney Parade Stadium since 1971.

The club has refurbished its courts for the season even though it is looking to the future and hoping to be an integral part of the proposed redevelopment of sporting facilities at Rodney Parade.

The team is spearheaded by Newport born & bred Rob Sutherland who is currently climbing the World rankings at 71, supported by Aaron Francomb of Australia, (World No.39), Campbell Grayson of New Zealand, (World No. 53), with Jethro Binns, (Abergavenny), Peter Creed (Caerphilly) and resident club professional Greg Tippings all figuring in the squad.

Some of the younger members of the squad are David Haley and Sam Huxtable of Newport who are still officially in the under 19 junior category and looking to earn their spurs at senior level.

The women include Deon Saffrey, (Wales No.1), Donna Urquhart, Tesni Evans from North Wales and Stacey Preece.



The format includes 10 matches, 5 home and 5 away with 5 players per team in each match. Newport is only allowed to field one non-Welsh player in any match and in addition all teams must field a female player.

Mr Huxtable emphasised that the primary objectives are to bring 1st class squash to Newport and Wales, whilst giving Welsh players the opportunity to test their skills against the very best players in the World within their home environment.

The vociferous crowd and electric atmosphere that has often been a feature at past big matches at Newport Squash Club has long been admired within Welsh squash circles, and has over the years been the dread of many a visiting opponent. The club is looking to reproduce these conditions during the coming season to create as big a home advantage as possible for the players.

The first home tie commences at 7pm on Tuesday 20th October against Chapel Allerton from Derbyshire, with other fixtures against Nottingham, Oxford, Duffield and Pontefract. If Newport finish in the top two they progress to the semi-finals in April against the top finishing clubs from the Southern division consisting of mainly Home Counties based sides.

Some of the top World ranked players will be playing for the visiting sides including Frenchman Thierry Lincou, (2004 World Champion and currently ranked World No.7), James Willstrop, (England's most successful ever junior player, currently World No.9) and Nick Matthew, (2006 British Open Champion & currently ranked World No.5).

Newport Squash Rackets Club is a private members club with excellent facilities and is keen to promote the game amongst all age groups. It has active junior and adult sections for both male and female participants and fields 10 teams in the Welsh National league structure.

Anyone interested in learning more about the club, the game of squash or the up & coming league programmes should either contact the Club Professional, Greg Tippings on 07824 660035 or browse the club website on www.newportsquashclub.org.uk for more information.

Media interviews can be arranged through the club and media presence at the home games will be welcomed by prior arrangement. The club will produce a "blog" style report on its website for syndication and we would welcome the local Welsh media using this to showcase the performance of the team and local sportsmen.
