

Notes from our Women's VSL meeting ~ Jan 14/18

Present: Sue Griffin (Jerico), Karen Stierhoff (Jerico), Lynn Buntain (Arbutus); Asa Zanatta (Arbutus), Larissa Beardmore (VLT), Karen Wiger (Arbutus); Donalda Meyers (Bonsor).

What is the Issue that we are trying to address?

Decrease in Women's Squash players, teams & league participation

- 1) How do we retain current league players & teams?
- 2) How do we attract new players & teams?

By implementing the changes over 2 years we will have the opportunity to evaluate the impact of the different changes. We should implement a few quick wins for September 2018, changes that would be very easy to implement, and then consider further changes for September 2019.

What do we need to do to retain our numbers:

- 1) Finding spares for some clubs are huge issue.
- 2) Currently we need to join a club to play league. Are we missing out on those that play at recreation centres that would like to be part of the league.
- 3) We need to find the 'orphan' that don't have access to a team
- 4) There are a lot of courts in the city that are in commercial and residential buildings. Are there women that play on these courts that might be interested in playing league.

Recommendations:

We would like to make the following recommendations to implement two changes to the Women's VSL this coming year (2018/19 season). And review other changes, listed below, for the following (2019/20 season).

- 1) Spares:
 - Spares can come from any team, any club, any division.
 - Players can spare up or spare down, wherever they are needed.
 - Spares can play for different teams and/or clubs each every week.
 - We should have a 'spare pool' for each division that all teams in the division can call upon. It would be convenient to have this information in Sporty HQ so that it would be easy for everyone to access, as well as all captains to have an email list of the division spares.

We are hoping that easier access to spares will 1) alleviate the issue of defaults, and 2) make league accessible to more women players that we can hopefully convert to fulltime players.

- 2) Team Placement in the Division:
 - Clubs submit their teams by September 7th of each year.
 - League starts 3 or 4 weeks later.

- Teams are 5, 6 or 7 full-time players. (Teams need to have committed players.)
- VSL will take the Sporty HQ ranking of all players and divide by the number of players to get the average ranking for the team.
- VSL will use this number to rank the teams and divide the teams into groups of 6. (The last division could have 4 - 8 teams depending on how many teams we have.)

Changing the way we determine team placement should make the scheduling process easier for VSL, it will help to ensure the divisions are more evenly matched, and the teams will be based on the current players, not the players that played the previous season.

- 3) We have several issues that we still need to explore and we should have another meeting to plan for how to follow up on these items. We may perhaps what to send out a survey to get answers on these questions and we would possibly look to the 2019/20 season to implement any of these changes.
 - Why are people not playing?
 - Would we be better to have teams of 4 instead of 5.
 - What percent of women who play squash, play league?
 - Should the hosting expectations change?
 - Should we continue to have play-offs?
 - Should we be limited by Sporty HQ rankings to determine the position of a player or are there other ways that would support league in a better manner.

Next Steps:

- 1) Let VSL know that we will expect to have the recommendations regarding spares and team placement implemented for the 2018/19 season.
- 2) Send the proposal to the captains of all the teams (Div. 1 to Div. 4) asking for their feedback.
- 3) Ask the captains to speak to there clubs about how the club will respond to having a non-member play for the club teams. (This will be different with every club, but if we have a league policy around it, it help to encourage clubs to be more lenient.)
- 4) Have a another meeting to discuss the items from #3.