

## Committee Meeting Minutes

Committee:	Sportsmanship & Character Committee
Date:	06/09/2022
Participants:	<p>Committee: Paul Assaiante, Richard Chin, Sunil Desai, Ned Edwards, Olivia Fiechter, Todd Harrity, Lynn Leong, Renato Paiva, Hope Prockop, Jeannie Rose, Shanin Specter</p> <p>Staff: Ned Edwards, Kevin Klipstein, Harry Smith</p> <p>Ex-officio: Soo Venkatesan</p>
Actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Circulate and review Committee Charter</li> <li>2. Determine how to measure/evaluate/baseline current state to set goals</li> </ol>

**Discussion Summary:**

Initial scoping was presented to the group which included:

1. Continually assess state of sportsmanship within the squash community,
  - a. the impact of US Squash policies and programs,
  - b. policies and characteristics of other institutions (e.g. schools, colleges and clubs) on sportsmanship;
2. Identify factors contributing to both good and poor sportsmanship,
  - a. ways to teach and inspire and appropriately recognize verifiably good sportsmanship at all levels of play and
  - b. consult on ways to mitigate and reduce poor sportsmanship
3. Make recommendations to US Squash for improving sportsmanship in order to preserve and improve the quality of all interactions among the members of the community.

Early thoughts were shared by each committee member, reflecting on when they heard of the committee, and what they considered a priority, including:

Sunil described his personal and his family’s deep commitment to sportsmanship and character, and his experiences in squash, and encouraged the group to analyze totality of what's out there to learn from and apply.

Lynn stressed the need to raise awareness, that it will be a process, and sportsmanship still an issue. Olivia described her experience as a junior, having seen an idol behave very poorly and its impact on her, and with the junior atmosphere being even more intense, having clarity on expectations will help all, and that it's vital to be proactive educationally.

Jeannie described her own experience in junior tennis, and her daughter's squash journey and having an early appreciation of the community, however also sees negative possibilities.

Ned added that he felt the Specter Center could be a useful and effective training ground. Hope expressed her joyful lifelong experience, described sportsmanship and character as the most important aspect of the sport, and interface between active players and this committee a positive step.

Renato expressed that he felt we can't allow juniors to be discouraged by being part of poor sportsmanship, and Coach Assaiante said we need to go back to basics, need to help people understand the beauty of the game, to get to the young people and feel good about having the dance go well, while also reach the coaches, who are caving in to the parents, in the name of love. Coach feels we're not giving what we need to our children.

Richard described the sport as trying to inflict physical and psychological pain, and enduring it, so there many opportunities to cross the line, interfere, double bounces, cheap lets, cheating, blocking, etc. A lot of the behavior can be taught, influenced and shaped, from coaches essentially and the sport presents many teaching opportunities too. Richard also linked sportsmanship to giving back to the sport, not just about playing in a clean way on the court, but giving back and playing our part.

Soo described the opportunity for growth, came at it from a youth sports, that we can all grow, whether on court, sidelines, coaching, and the landscape is shifting. Shanin talked about being poorly behaved as early junior, and worked his way out of it, and feels we have lost part of what's important in squash, the self-adjudicatory component.

The committee also discussed a range of topics including varied constituencies, external societal influences and initial thoughts on what the committee should focus on:

- Parents, coaches, players, non-players, officials, directors, staff, professionals, HOFers, and hackers, college, urban squash
- Where we are as a society is challenging, need to get back to old core values.
- Evaluate what happened, why has the culture changed, are there other underlying causes
- Hopefully gives everyone a better idea of where each other is coming from to work effectively
- Setting early goals is important, and have committee members at events, and maintain the association

- How do we leverage the sportsmanship award recipients and emphasize the whole person concept

**Next Steps**

Next meeting to review Committee Charter and determine how to measure/evaluate/baseline current state in order to set goals.