

2026-27 BUCS SQUASH SAG - MEETING 1 - MINUTES

Date Wednesday 9 September 2026
Time 14:00-16:00
Location Microsoft Teams

ATTENDEES	ORGANISATION
Dan Roberts Erin Simmonds Hannah Underhill Harvey Burn James Marengi Maz Veater Philip Lyons Simon Tunley Tomos Rosser	BUCS BUCS BUCS BUCS University of Manchester BUCS Scottish Squash Independent Squash Wales
APOLOGIES	ORGANISATION
Daniel Busby Guy Coles Jonathan Tate	University of Warwick University of West England University of Birmingham

Item	Action
1. Apologies / Welcome Apologies were received from Guy Coles with Simon Tunley joining midway through. JM would follow up with DB and JT. Introductions were made with Maz Veater returning as National Competitions Manager in the near future, following Hannah Underhill's maternity cover period.	
2. Minutes and Matters Arising (12.05.26) The group reviewed outstanding items from the previous meeting. Teams access to shared documents was confirmed for TR and PL, with a reminder to use notifications and tagging to ensure members receive updates. Rules and regulations changes were confirmed as approved, including the squash trophy change, match ball regulation change, tier one seeding weekend and tin height. The 2026-27 league and knockout dates had been published. Several outstanding items were rolled forward, including the Ryder Cup concept discussion, squash ball guidance follow-up with Zena, Warwick event feedback, and graded event web content. Action: JT to lead on seeding process for the Squash trophy format TR to follow up with ZW regarding squash ball guidance and previous feedback JM to follow up with DB about graded opportunities	JT TR JM/DB

3. BUCS individuals review and planning

ES/HB reported that the previous Individual Championships attracted 374 entries, an 8% increase on the prior year, with 37 institutions represented, 11 referees and around 460 matches delivered. Digital scoring was regarded as a significant improvement, supporting event efficiency and sustainability. A reserve list was used for the first time and worked well. The change to use a competition ball for Women's C and D grades improved rally quality, though a small number of players preferred the single yellow dot ball. Key challenges included referee availability, particularly on the Friday, disruption caused by a fire alarm, the cancellation of the planned live stream, low student survey response rates and SportyHQ profile duplication issues.

Recommendations discussed included creating a WhatsApp community for event communications, clarifying that squash level grade boundaries are indicative and subject to entries received, reviewing the draw format for future years, improving event PR and media coverage, exploring on-site stringing/sponsor presence, strengthening volunteer succession planning and considering tender requirements that ask host venues to provide defined volunteer support. The group were supportive of the recommendations.

ST/ES/HB had drafted a volunteer role description to be rolled out to support with recruitment of future volunteers as longer standing supporters look to move on. This can be shared through the network of contacts being developed as well as through BUCS channels.

Action:

- **BUCS colleagues/ST to action agreed recommendations within event organisation for this year including wording around squash levels grade boundaries.**
- **Confirm Dunlop ball provision and clarify how the new Dunlop ball range, including any "uni" ball, aligns with BUCS grades.**
- **Review future Individuals draw format, including potential A grade expansion and qualification model following this years event.**
- **Share the next Individuals tender with SAG in advance to sense-check format, venue and volunteer requirements based on review.**
- **Explore PR opportunities before and after Individuals, including NGB channels and wider squash networks.**
- **Explore potential stringing or kit partner support, including Ashaway links and any Dunlop partnership.**

HB/ES/
ST

HB/ST

ST/JT/
SAG

HB

HB/SAG

HB

4. BUCS Updates

BUCS confirmed that the wider governance review of stakeholder groups is ongoing, but the Squash SAG will continue in its current form for the present year. The group was thanked for its contribution and for building a more purposeful structure. BUCS also confirmed that league and knockout structural change work is being paused while central analysis is undertaken sport by sport, with priority given to sports where NGB alignment can support sustainable implementation. Squash remains on BUCS' radar alongside other sports including golf, table tennis, rugby league and hockey.

The recruitment of male and female student representatives has not yet produced applicants. The group agreed that wider and more direct recruitment routes are needed, including face-to-face promotion at Individuals and other events, direct communication through BUCS Play once student contacts are available, coach networks and university squash club social media channels.

JM also updated that there had been no response from England Squash, with a couple of other options explored to engage including the new Chair of the Board who has HE experience (Mark Jeffreys) Action: • Promote opportunities for student reps across current networks. Should there be no interest, expand this through face-to-face channels at events and club network being developed • ST to share University squash club contacts and social media handles for the group to add to • JM to follow up with all SAG members about ongoing engagement with group	ALL ST JM
5. Whole programme changes There has been no further work on this since last meeting, awaiting the steer from BUCS following the League and Knockout Evolution process. BUCS will reach out to the SAG following this work to discuss next steps and provide more detailed steer to support with any identified changes Action: • MV/HU to reach out to SAG when appropriate to discuss programme changes	MV/HU
6. Upcoming events DR joined the call to outline the National League format, with stage one split into northern and southern host venues, followed by crossover fixtures to determine top and bottom stage two groupings. Applications received to host the stage 1 and 2 were limited. Heriot-Watt was the sole applicant for Stage One North and Birmingham the sole applicant for Stage One South, so both were accepted. For Stage Two, Heriot-Watt and Warwick applied. The group discussed event quality, geographical fairness, travel cost, member feedback and prior hosting history. Although Heriot-Watt was recognised as a strong playing venue, the group agreed that Warwick should host Stage Two this cycle due to rotation, geography and Heriot-Watt already hosting Stage One North and having hosted Stage Two previously. The group also supported exploring a future host venue pool or rotation model, rather than relying solely on annual tendering. This would improve planning, fairness and transparency while retaining flexibility if host institutions are not competing or are unable to deliver. Welsh venues, including Cardiff, were discussed as potentially suitable if they meet court and event requirements. Action: • DR to confirm host venues to applicants and wider University community • Review of National League host selection process and whether an earlier tender timeline and/or multi-year host venue pool would be plausible	DR DR/SAG
7. International opportunities World University Games – The group received an update on British university squash representation at the World University Games. A team was successfully sent after a challenging recruitment process, with representation from Birmingham, Loughborough and St Andrews University. The group viewed the main success as re-establishing representation after several years away. Further evaluation is needed, including learnings from the event, selection process and future planning for 2028. Home Nations opportunity - A possible Home Nations squash opportunity was also noted. EUS interest has been raised through contacts at Birmingham, but further information is awaited. The group agreed the idea could be positive and should be revisited once more detail is available	

Action: • An evaluation paper from those involved in WUGs with feedback, learning and future recommendations was requested to be submitted to the SAG at next meeting • Follow up with Alex from EUS about possible squash involvement in Home Nations	ST JT/JM
8. England, Scottish and Welsh Squash initiatives linked with HE and funding opportunities/Working Group PL had to leave the call early and there is current no England Squash representative on the SAG. TR updated that Squash Wales has introduced a free community membership tier to help capture data on students and other players who are active but not paid members. The membership includes some benefits and is intended to make engagement easier. BUCS confirmed that NGB affiliation information for all countries can be added to existing documentation as a recommended section where appropriate, and that wider information could also be hosted on the BUCS squash webpage or shared through BUCS Play. The group discussed the importance of signposting players to membership benefits such as insurance, rankings and wider competition access, noting that insurance provision varies by institution and is not provided directly through BUCS membership. Action: • TR to share Squash Wales information and benefits summary with BUCS to upload to web • PL to share for Scottish Squash • Explore usage of BUCS Play and other marketing opportunities of this and other key squash information (eg graded events) to the squash playing communities (eg QR code at events to landing page)	TR PL MV/HU
9. Squash SAG Objectives The group reviewed the SAG objectives for the new delivery year and agreed they remain broadly appropriate. The programme review objective should be placed in a holding position while BUCS completes central analysis. The national trophy seeding work should be added explicitly to the objectives, with JT identified as likely lead. Members were reminded to update their allocated objective/action areas ahead of meetings so time can be used efficiently and progress can be tracked. Action: • Add national trophy seeding process to objective for JT to lead • SAG members to keep updates documented for their areas before SAG meetings	JM/JT ALL
10. A.O.B. ST raised a potential future opportunity to explore university racketball activity, noting the growth of UK racketball and its possible role in supporting squash court retention. The group agreed this should be explored further through an initial sense-check with UK racquetball contacts and institutions. Proposed future meeting dates were Friday 11 December 2026, 9 April 2027 and 9 July 2027, though future meetings should avoid Fridays to allow MV to attend. The group also thanked Hannah Underhill for her support and contribution during her maternity cover period.	

Action:

- **Contact Mike Harris/UK Racketball to understand appetite, demographics and possible University event opportunities as well as sense check institution interest**
- **Issue calendar invites for future meetings**

ST

JM

Dates and times of meetings for 2026-27 season.Meeting 2 – 11th December, 2026Meeting 3 – 9th April, 2027Meeting 4 – 9th July, 2027