

## Dave Ferguson – My sporting life

### Playing

Started about 1975 at Meadowbank, joined Scottish Widows (Dalkeith Road) Squash Club, a very active club with annual Open and Handicap tournaments and over 40 players on the ladder. It was created and run by senior actuary, Hibernian FC historian and Goons fan John Mackay. Gradually but determinedly improved, under the patient guidance of our best player Tam McGinley, and went on to reach no. 1 and win the Scottish Widows Open Championship 9 times. First visit to ESC (1975 or 76) with Tam to see Leisure Showers “GB v Rest of World” 4-man exhibition involving John Easter of England and a substitute for late call-off Jonah Barrington, playing against greats Hiddy Jahan (Pakistan) and Ahmed Safwat (Egypt). Inspired particularly by winner Safwat and his subtle, creative-boasting, counter-attacking game. Joined Waverley 1977, at the suggestion of Scottish Widows colleagues Pete Nicolson (Waverley’s President at the time) and James Moszczynski. First played team squash for Pavilion Squash Club (Edinburgh University Intra-Mural Squash League Division 1) and eventually played for them for 30 years, mostly as captain and no. 1. Joined Tam at North Berwick Squash Club in season 1979/1980 (Waverley had only 2 teams and I wasn’t good enough to play for them yet). Played at no. 5 as we won East of Scotland League Division 4b then a promotion play-off. Played the legendary Aman Khan (Jahangir’s cousin) in a friendly match at Marine Hotel North Berwick v Albany Hotel Birmingham. In 1981, played John McGhee in a 4-player North Berwick v ESC publicity tournament for Marine Hotel, the other semi being Tam McGinley v Tom Smith. John being John let me win the first game, but then took off his duffel coat and wellies and the ESC guys played next day in the final. Reported, with photos, in the East Lothian Courier (photo given to Alastair) and, to my embarrassment and John’s amusement, my 3-1 loss was described as an upset. At the end of season 1980/81, I discovered that half the team actively didn’t want any further promotions. I understood the sentiment, but that was not for me and, with no hard feelings, left to try my luck at Waverley. Played once for the 2<sup>nd</sup> team then promoted to the 1<sup>st</sup> team. Stayed in that team 28 years until 2009, the last 18 as captain. Won the annual Wallace Trophy (Wigtown Rugby and Squash Club, Stranraer) in 1985 with Waverley’s team of Peter Shivas, Bob Hart, myself and Stranraer native Dave Hickman. Reported with group photos in the Wigtown Free Press (I have the cuttings). Won Waverley championship in 1995 and 1996, playing Grant Jarvie and Andrew Leitch respectively in the finals. Runner-up 3 times before then and in 2002. Won the ESC Octoberfest in 2006 as non-playing captain of Waverley Wonderers. Nowadays play for the 4<sup>th</sup> team.

### German Adventure

At the invitation of my great friends Thorsten Bauer and Michael Schreiber, played for Squash Club Kaiserslautern from season 2003/4 for two years, flying at the club’s expense from Prestwick to Frankfurt Hahn every few Fridays. I’d land about 11pm, to be met and chauffeured by a team-mate to Kaiserslautern (over an hour’s drive) and stay at their house. On the Saturday afternoon we’d play matches against the other two teams present at the venue. Away fixtures could be 90 miles away, but not too long on the fast Autobahn motorway. After each matchday we’d meet up for a banquet with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Team players and partners at the wonderful Rainer Klöter Chickenranch in the small town of Mölsheim. Rainer was one of the club sponsors named on our team shirts. On the Sunday afternoon I’d be driven back to Hahn and shovelled onto the homeward plane, arriving home a bit before midnight. With me playing at no. 4 in the team of 4, we won the Verbandsliga (5<sup>th</sup> tier in Germany, Bundesliga being 1<sup>st</sup>) on an exciting last day. The club then persuaded Waverley’s top player Iain Murray to play no. 1 for the 1<sup>st</sup> team the next season, with me playing for the 2<sup>nd</sup> team. We travelled together for all the matches and shared the Sunday-night shovel onto the home flight. Iain won all 8 of his matches, leading the team to another last-day decider at home (Marathon Club). But he couldn’t make that final match so everyone had to step up one place and I came in at no. 4. We all rose to the occasion, clinching the Oberliga title and promotion to the Regionalliga, Michael hitting the final winner to seal the win before the last match was finished. In a typical show of German sportsmanship, the players of our two opponents Germersheim and Blieskastel-Homburg paused the match and formed a guard of honour for us to walk through. Unfortunately, the club had to quit the Leagues before the next season because of a few injuries to key players.

## Administration

Waverley committee – Bar Convener for 2 years in the 70s, Squash Convener for 2 years in the 80s, Social Convener for 15 years to date, organiser of the former Elliot Sports Waverley Open 1980-1986 (top Scots entered because of the Edinburgh Crystal prizes and it was frequently won by Raymond Stevenson). Organiser of the Club Championships 1985 to date. President 2010-2013 and 2016 to date (nobody's done it for more than 3 years since the mid-60s).

East of Scotland Squash – Secretary to Eric Donohoe's Chairman 1999-2011, organiser of East Closed 2000-2009, renaming it "The Hugely Enjoyable East Championships" sponsored by the fictitious sumo wrestler Huge Lee. Co-organiser of the East Masters with Eric 2001-2005. Redrafted/updated the League Rules 5 times over the years.

## Refereeing

Marked Waverley 1<sup>st</sup> team matches before being in the team, attained Grade 3 qualification in 1985. Chosen in 1986 by Mike Fitchett to mark the Jonah Barrington v Mark Maclean exhibition match at ESC as part of their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. I still have the marking sheet, signed by Jonah (photo of it sent to Alastair). Refereed many years for Scottish Squash before deciding to go for the higher qualifications. Successfully assessed by Scotland's best-ever (World) referee Ian Allanach and George Tierney to Grade 2 in 2005, then by Ian Allanach and World referee Jack Flynn of Ireland to Grade 1 (National Grade) in 2009. Refereed extensively in Scottish Squash senior and junior tournaments, Scottish Junior Opens, finals of the ESC Open (Artemis) and of the National Championships. Represented Scotland in the European Championships (Finland) in 2011 (photo given to Alastair). Was asked again on subsequent occasions but declined. Refereed the 2014 "Legends of Squash" event at Aberdeen SRC along with Yvonne and George Tierney. This was an exhibition round-robin tournament between 6 former World No. 1s Lee Beachill, Thierry Lincou, Peter Nicol, David Palmer, Jonathon Power and John White. Alternately referee, marker or sitting out, we did all 15 matches between us, a Ferguson being involved in each one ! Appointed by Tournament Director Simon Boughton in 2014 as permanent ESC Open Tournament Referee to replace the deceased Ken Gibbs, who had done all the previous ones run by Simon. Have so far completed 7. Voted Scottish Squash Referee of the Year by the senior Performance Squad players in 2016. Quit active refereeing "at the top" immediately after doing the Alan Clyne v Greg Lobban Scottish National final at ESC in 2018. Still involved in referee education, having conducted 15 Grade 3 courses throughout the country 2009 to date and individually qualified 116 people as Grade 3 referees (involves the course, then assessing at a proper match and talking through their answers to a written paper). Created a shorter 45-minute "let/stroke/no-let" course in 2016 and have so far conducted 12 of these throughout the country.

## Coaching/Scottish Squash

Coached at Waverley since the 2000s and at Edinburgh Academy school 2006 to date. Administered the Independent Schools League 2008-2017. Assistant (unpaid) to National Coaches Paul Frank and Roger Flynn 2003–2016 working with the Scottish Squash Academy Performance Group players every Thursday night 6.00-8.00 on a one-to-one basis, feeding for them to practice particular shots. Wrote 7 articles for Scottish Squash "Rebounder" magazine 2006-8 and 3 articles in 2009 for their website under the banner "Dave's World" – all voluntary, although Paul Frank tried to get me paid £50 per article ! Awarded Scottish Squash "Supporter of the Year" 2011/12 (for assorted services). Claimed the credit when Alan Clyne's winning drop cut into the nick to win the Artemis semi v Darryl Selby in 2015 (he won the final) – a shot he'd been honing for years with my "feeding". Alan offered me more than the 15% credit I was claiming. Received Scottish Squash "Services to Squash" award for 2015.