

## President's Report to the 2025 AGM

The 2024-2025 year had moments of challenge, joy and frustration.

The main challenge has been the drying up of funding. We had been successful at applying for grants over the past several years, and we rely on those grants to help fund the association. With fewer and fewer grants available, and more and more applicants for those grants, we can no longer rely on the variety of small grants to help fund our endeavours. Our other primary challenge is the lack of courts in the province.

The joys are reflected in our athletes. The junior programs are going great, our coaches are dedicated, and our tournaments were well attended.

The frustration comes from the realization that, without funding, we will not be able to afford a part time Executive Director, which undermines our ability to function effectively as a Governance board. Communicating with Sport BC and viaSport has been so much harder than it should be, and taken so much more time that it should, which is frustrating because we are volunteers with a low-paid part-time ED.

Our Executive Director, David Serra, has been an absolutely gift to racquetball. He is very organized, and so knowledgeable about the sport, and so determined to make things work and to jump through the ever-changing hoops that we are faced with. I am sure that you have all dealt with David on some level, whether he is supporting a coach, or making arrangements with a facility, or helping a tournament organizer ... David has been fabulous.

Another person that you don't hear as much about, but who has been vital to our association, is Ken Storozuk. The financial reporting required by our funders has hugely increased in complexity, which means Ken has spent countless hours providing financial reports in ever-changing formats. Thank you to Ken for this.

I also want to recognize Josephine Choi who has been our communications guru, making sure that information is posted online in a timely and accurate way, and provided to members by email as well. We needed David to have time to do other important work, and it has been very helpful to rely on Josephine to captain the vital communications piece.

Bill Burdge is our Vice President and his dedication to seeking out donors and exploring development ideas has been ongoing. Jason Salchert and Michael Smith are our most recent additions to the Board, and both have been forthcoming with ideas and help.

Without funding, we have a choice: return to the old way of having volunteers do everything, or shut down. The old way just does not work in this new age: the requirements from government and other funders have increased to the level that you need policy experts, financial wizards, technology specialists and diplomatic skills in order to survive, not to mention an impossible level of patience in dealing with bureaucracy, and then after that you can look at coaching and tournaments and other more hands-on racquetball activities.

We have an application in for a Gaming grant. If we get that, then we will be able to continue for another year, and this Board will spend that year focusing on how to survive in this new reality. Without the Gaming grant, and with no base funding available from government, we will likely not be here next year.

We have enough funding to keep David on part time for the summer, then we will see what happens with our Gaming Grant application.

Until then, we keep playing and we keep spreading the word about our great sport.

Cheryl McKeeman

Racquetball BC President