

## **LTA COUNTY PADEL NEWSLETTER**

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### **NEWS FROM AROUND THE UK**

#### **New Venues.....**

Sussex welcomed its first indoor centre with the opening of The Padel Hub in Crawley, with the added bonus of relocating the county office to this fantastic new venue.

#### **Femme Open runs its first junior girls event**

Femme Open held their first event for girls on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February at The Padel Hub in Slough. 18 girls from age 8 to 20 attended a two-hour session run by Sylvie Darrieumerlou and Pep Stonor. The aim was to give girls an opportunity to try padel if they hadn't before, meet some other girls playing padel and have fun in half term. The warm up sessions included exercises to ensure all the girls met each other and then the groups were split into two for more fun drills for the younger players and matchplay for the older girls.

The motivation for running the event was because several parents of girls approached Femme Open last year asking how to get their girls playing padel or to meet other girls playing. 2 courts were booked to start with and by the time of the event, 4 courts were needed to host 18 girls who came from Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. Femme prioritised ensuring the environment was inclusive and welcoming and that it was about being on court for 2 hours to learn new skills, make new friends and have fun.

Femme Open worked with Berkshire Tennis to advertise the event through joint networks and it was great to see so many girls from the local tennis clubs also trying padel.

Pep Stonor "The feedback has been great and we now need to put a plan in place to provide more of these opportunities. Hopefully it also inspires venues across the country to think about how to create events for girls to play padel in their clubs to increase participation. After all they are the future! "

#### **Here's what some of the girls thought of the day:**

- Elizabeth aged 10 "It was a really fun event with great coaching. Hopefully it will inspire more girls to play padel"
- Sophie aged 8 "I had a great day. I loved it and made some new friends"
- Sylvie: "It was fantastic to see so many young women taking part, enjoying themselves no matter what their level was. Let's keep doing more of these events!"



## Who's missing?

As Padel grows from strength to strength on a national level, our aim should be to make the sport we all love accessible to as many people as possible. We are not only privileged to enjoy the sport for its own sake, but to discover its growing popularity, whether you're a racquet aficionado or Padel newbie. With the latter in mind—those to whom the idea of Padel would not naturally occur—which groups are missing from our courts, clubs and conversations?

Padel is all about building a community. Already it has a reputation for being friendly and welcoming; now, our next step should be doing the work to ensure our friendly and welcoming reputation is available to everyone. Now is the time for us to open up to those who would like to get involved, but don't know how, or even know that padel exists.

For a sport that prides itself on a reputation of community and mutual enterprise, the next logical step is towards a Padel which engages those in underrepresented communities, and to help amplify voices we simply don't hear from.

Whether it be disabled players who need accessibility arrangements to ensure they can get on court, to young people who haven't yet had the chance to pick up a racket, our job is to connect with underrepresented communities, and to embrace our capacity for difference and diversity. It's in this diversity that our sport can become a better game for all.

Over the next few months, we'll be hearing from those who are trying to make Padel a more accessible game for everyone. We'll hear from people from a wide array of backgrounds and perspectives, who will no doubt enrich our collective experience of Padel, both on and off court.

At this important stage in Padel's development, it's high time we ask: who is out there that needs representing in our sport?

**Padel for all, how to do inclusive padel**  
Report from Anna Wilson at Sundridge Park, Kent

The Sundridge Park Club in Kent are delighted to see their padel inclusivity strategy come to fruition this autumn. They have worked hard at networking with organisations supporting disability and inclusion across all sports e.g. Charlton Athletic Community Trust, Bromley Mencap. Oxleas NHS trust, Access Sport and Marjorie McClure School

The club were successful in a grant application from the LTA Tennis Foundation and this is used to fund the delivery of the sessions. Currently there are 4 sessions a week in the program and the club aims to have 6 by next summer when their 3rd padel court opens and increase the participants to 80

Padel has proved to be the game that delivers so many benefits mentally and physically to so many and the benefits continue off court.

All sessions are coach led and the feedback has been incredibly positive.

Oxleas Mental Health Early Intervention in Psychosis Team

*“Padel is great because it is a group sport and I have had the chance to meet some amazing people. Playing padel has helped build my confidence. Due to the severity of my mental health illnesses, I was very concerned as to how I will perform, integrate back into society etc. But now I feel like I am in a better position, I feel more optimistic about the future and my mental health has improved”*

*“Lessons are good, all abilities are integrated well and this allows everyone to play at their own level. The sport is relaxing and fun itself, rules are easily learnt. Also, a good opportunity to surround yourself with people who have had similar struggles and helps to reinforce that you are not alone.”*



PE/Partnership lead at Marjorie McClure, a specialist school for children with complex medical needs and physical disabilities.

*“Part of our physical education curriculum for 14-19 year olds is to provide the students with opportunities to access sport and physical activity in the community so that when they leave education they know what they access to keep active and healthy in the future. Jonas has provided differentiated coaching which has allowed every student in a mixed ability group to achieve success and play the game to their own capabilities. The accessibility of the club has meant that*

*young adults in wheelchairs and walking frames have had the opportunity to join in with the sessions.*



## **COMPETITION**

### **Seniors World Tournament, 15-20 April, La Nucia, Spain**

Good luck to all those selected to represent the UK in Spain next month. Full details [here](#).