***IPRO Director’s Message March, 2021***

***Staying a step ahead***

**Back in the mid 1980’s International Squash recognized the 20 foot wide indoor court. The rationale was the athletic club industry, amidst a construction boom, would foster more court construction with the traditional US handball/racquetball dimensions (20 x 40 x 20). International rules were based on a 21 foot width, and the North American version was based on an 18 ½ foot width. As a result, North American Squash (hardball) began a disappearing act. The International version (softball) replaced it as the dominant squash discipline in the United States. Three more decades passed until the International Racquetball Federation accepted the 21 foot court width as part of its rules.**

**As the athletic club industry evolved into a more diverse universe, more fitness choices and potential income centers inside facilities transformed the traditional ‘court club’. Fly by night fads invaded the market, creating more competition and some questionable business practices. At the same time, demographic and economic conditions influenced a slowdown in court construction.**

**Programming with cross-pollination is critical for longevity and financial stability. Transitional courts have become more commonplace; allowing for a hybrid of handball-racquetball-squash racquets for frequent and occasional participants. The movable glass wall is usually the backwall; yet, recently horizontal movement (sidewall) has also occurred (according to Brian Richy of A Best Enterprises). Having dedicated courts alongside a bank of transitional courts lends itself to an efficient use of space with cost savings as well as greater consumer satisfaction and value. Less can become more!**

**In today’s marketplace many venues have transitioned courts to ‘non-best’ uses. Existing courts deserve constant energy infusion. Whether it is racquetball or racketball; squash or squash 57, or paddleball; we need to be flexible. Whether it is 20 x 40, 21 x 40, 20 x 32, 21 x 32, 25 by 32 (international squash doubles court), or 30 x 60 (Gaelic Handball court), let us encourage all options so our infrastructure grows incrementally with new court construction and we preserve our legacy. Finally, combining disciplines (squash and racquetball) under one umbrella organization may assist in maintaining a position within the highest tier of the international stage. This concept is not new; look at Baseball & Softball, Downhill & Nordic Skiing, Track and Field, Volleyball, and others.**

***Yoga pose of the month: Wind removing series (part 2)***

***Lie on back, bring both knees into chest with knees together at midline***

***Hold for 20-30 seconds & keep normal breathing through the nose***

***Benefits: lower back, core, and transverse colon Affirmation: I accept and honor love of myself***

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