

Keith Nicholls Nominated for Vice President at 2014 AGM

Biography

How do you cover 49 years of involvement as a player, coach and an administrator without boring the reader to death?

I look back to the first AGM I attended in 1969. After only 9 months in the game I was persuaded by my college tutor who was AVA Treasurer to attend. I looked at the row of older people sitting behind a table and thought "What are these old people doing running volleyball?"

Reading my mind Roy told me these were the people who introduced the sport to Britain, who set up the NGB, who organised coaching and development courses and without their contribution I would never have been able to play. I have always felt a debt to those people and the many others who have supported and encouraged me throughout my time in the game. In return I have tried to do the same for others in all aspects of the game.

So what have I done for volleyball?

As well as playing and coaching at many levels including a national team at West European, Commonwealth and World Championships I ran a succession of local and NVL clubs.

After election as Asst General Secretary in 1967 with Ian Thompson I set up Volleyball magazine, I started EVA Sales and wrote two coaching books. As past Chairman of the Competition Commission I set up the multi division NVL wrote the rules; if you play in the Student Cup I set this up with George Bulman.

Through my role for the EVA as facilities and equipment advisor I managed to stop the sale of unsafe volleyballs and posts. Many of the brands and products you use now stem from that role and through Sportset that I also set up. Recently I worked with all the major post manufacturers to upgrade their equipment to suit the modern game and to cease production of weighted posts. I wrote the current technical Equipment and Facility Guidelines and the beach Volleyball Court Design specification.

I served as Vice Chairman of Volleyball England for two years and was a commentator on C4 volleyball for two years. I was on the Board as Technical Director for four years. At regional Level I have run the Eastern Tournament Series for 20 years.

Fundamental to the development of the sport is the playing infrastructure. As a member of the Sport England Indoor facilities Group I successfully campaigned to get Sport England to make the first change in the dimensions of the standard sports hall in 50 years. The new size allows for two training courts in a single hall maximising participation.

This season I devised an equipment/installation programme funded by Volleyball England that has doubled the playing capacity in over 30 universities. The intention now is to try and get funding for a much wider roll out of the programme to member clubs.

I am a Director of the Ruth Nicholls Volleyball Foundation that has made thousands of pounds of grant to support grass roots volleyball.

I am a Director of the Sports Council Trust that owns and manages the National Sports Centres. Through my work on this Board and with the Sport England facilities group I have a greater understanding of the way Sport England is looking to develop and change sport. This experience is invaluable and would help me, the Board and the association in the post of Vice President.

This is a time of change in volleyball. Some highly experienced Directors are having to step down to comply with Sport England regulations. Looking at the nominations I can see some excellent candidates. The HQ has had a massive change of staff with many new enthusiastic staff with wide experience outside this sport. I am standing for Vice President as I believe I can bring extensive experience as well as a critical and innovative mind to the Board and would welcome your support.