



SQUASHERCISE LAUNCHED

IAN MCKENZIE REPORTS ON THE START OF A NEW EXERCISE PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN BASED AROUND SQUASH

The girls were loving it – running around, jumping up and down, swishing at imaginary balls and some real ones, lunging and stretching with lots of activity and excitement.

This was a new exercise programme for women, called 'squashercise', with squash as the focus. It was being launched at the Wimbledon Lakeside Club.

If you can have boxercise and innumerable dance exercise classes, why not have one with squash as a theme, include all the fitness and movement benefits of this dynamic sport, introduce squash skills and have some fun with real balls while enjoying a good workout?

After the warm-up, conducted by Hunts County Squash Club coach James Powley, came a competitive pairs balance challenge, ball skills, lunges with the racket, and patting, rolling and hitting a ball in turn.

There was a 'star' for this media launch to encourage publications to send journalists and photographers, namely Cheska Hull, who is in the scripted reality television programme *Made in Chelsea*. She was suitably blond and statuesque, with inappropriate boots for squash but satisfactory for this class.

Despite being renowned for her "dedication to fitness", Cheska did flag a bit. Running around a court picking a squash ball off the floor was not really her thing, but overall she seemed to enjoy it.

Squashercise classes need to be held on a squash court, which is a big advantage for the programme.

"The idea is to use a squash court to break down the barriers to getting on court," explained the programme's originator, Gail Pink.

"The idea is to target women who haven't previously been on a squash court, women who have used a gym but not played squash and who may end up playing squash."

On court the girls were lunging with rackets above their heads. "The classes build up to hitting the ball. The idea is that

they will come back and play, and bring their kids along," Pink added.

Steve Amos, the ESR's head of development and marketing, explained the origins of the programme.

"James Powley and Gail Pink [nee Kerrison] devised the programme and have delivered training to 114 coaches and accredited them as fitness instructors," he said.

So the rationale behind the classes is that this is a fully accredited fitness programme. Workshops are planned to train squashercise instructors. The whole orientation is that it is a fitness class rather than a squash coaching session, but squash can come in later. The courses can be adapted from a gentle beginner's to a high-intensity workout for competitive players.

Two participants dropped their rackets in the racket-throwing contest with a clatter and giggle. "The aim is to be high tempo," said Pink.

The players were now working in a line, hitting down the walls and running to the corners, practising sidesteps.

An impressive instructor training manual comes with specific instructions on a wide range of exercises (138 in all with clear bullet-point instructions), which can be used to make up the classes and which the



Made in Chelsea star Cheska Hull tries Squashercise



Angela Cwaczka and Cheska Hull are caught in a balancing act

instructor can adapt to the participants' level.

There are sections on warm-ups, skill-based activities, how to keep players moving, games and cool-down exercises. At the end of a session you can take your pulse rate to monitor your progress.

Squashercise is part of ESR's Big Hit campaign. Information on classes and on how to become an instructor can be found on thebighit.net.

MORE ELITE SQUASH CAMPS

West Country camps specialist Hadrian Stiff, of Elite Squash, is offering further sessions in 2013 for all levels of adults and juniors at the prestigious Redwood Lodge and Country Club in Bristol.

Accommodation is available at the four-star hotel for adults. For further information, contact redwood-hotel.co.uk/leisure-club.

JUNIOR INTERMEDIATE

Dates: October 31- November 1.

Cost: £30 per day.

JUNIOR ELITE

Dates: October 28-29, December 28-29.

Cost: £110, including lunch.

ADULT

Dates: November 30- December 1.

Cost: £160, including lunch, video and document feedback.

For further information, contact elitesquash.co.uk/camps

ULTIMATE MASTERCLASS

Stacey Ross, of London Squash Camp, has organised what he calls "the ultimate masterclass" in November.

Three world-class professionals – Peter Barker (world no.7), Daryl Selby (14) and Tom Richards (22) – will deliver the workshop over the weekend of November 16 and 17 at Wimbledon Lakeside Squash Club in South London.

Along with the professionals' input, there will be seminars with sports psychologist Greg Pearman and sports nutritionist and author Angela Steele.

On the Saturday night, at 7.30pm, there will be an exhibition match between Barker and Selby. Tickets are included with the course price or available separately. For full details, contact info@londonsquashcamp.co.uk.