



CENTRAL COUNTIES

Executive Director Update – February 2016

I recently re-joined our local squash club after a 10-year hiatus in an effort to get back into some semblance of shape. For the first few months I used the stationary bikes, elliptical machine and treadmills to build up some cardio. I signed my middle son up for the Junior Squash program that meets every Sunday morning for an hour and a half of lessons and instruction. While panting from one of the machines, I watch and listen. And along the way, I did something that I hadn't expected from watching a group of non-players getting taught. I learned.

With the exception of the 10 year break where the excuses for not playing included no money, no time, too busy, I have been playing squash since I was 12 – back when my father used to take me to the courts at Balmoral Recreation Centre. That was when squash racquets were made out of wood and had a VERY small surface area to hit the non-bouncing balls. I don't want to date myself, but I remember getting my dad a Peanuts shirt with Snoopy in full squash gear that read, "Speak softly and carry a \$75 racquet!"...

The point is that I played a lot of squash and thought that I knew most everything about the game and how to play effectively. But in watching these newbies learn it from scratch, I realized that there were many things that I could incorporate into my game to be a better player. Body positioning, angle of attack and stroke follow-through were three of the lessons where I took as much away from watching as the kids did from doing.

I then began incorporating the new moves into my established game play. It was hit and miss at first because it was easy to fall back into old routines and habits. But, with some effort and focus, they are starting to become second nature.

The same can be true of your business. No matter how good you are at attracting new clients, customer service, marketing, etc., there is always room to learn something new that may make it more effective. Central Counties, in partnership with our regions of York, Durham and Headwaters, is hosting our Annual Tourism Symposiums at the end of March. In addition to networking, you will learn about the opportunities available to help you be more effective at your business. I strongly urge you to attend this year. You can register in the link for your region in this newsletter. Adding tourism to your business model is like me positioning my body at 45 degrees to the ball instead of 90 degrees. You are already doing a great job with your current business model, but by just re-adjusting your foot position and forcing yourself to keep re-adjusting until it becomes habit, you may see a few more wins.

For me, my wins have been losing by less against my best friend. Until I implemented the changes I learned from watching Junior Squash, I was hard-pressed to get five points a game. I am now averaging about 10. I am still losing the game but with perseverance and an open mind to learning more techniques, I am going to beat him one day soon.

If you have any questions or would just like to reach out, I am always available at cthibeault@centralcounties.ca.

Have a great day!
Chuck Thibeault