



## Focus on...Princes

**W**ith five teams in the Middlesex Squash League, Princes Club is an established venue in the county squash scene. This season the first team competes in Division One for the first time reflecting the increase in standard in the eight years since the squash courts were built. As visiting teams will know, however, Princes is renowned as a water ski venue, the club being one of the oldest in the UK. As such it has hosted some of the top tournaments in the world, this year being no exception when the club held the World Cup for the second time.

Sponsored by KP Foods, the tournament saw ten teams representing fourteen countries take to the water at Princes in the middle of June. With the best skiers in the world, perfect skiing conditions and the best weather of the summer, spectators turned up in their thousands to total a viewing public of millions as the event was broadcast worldwide by the BBC.

The World Cup is a team event with four skiers per team, three of whom ski in each of the three disciplines of slalom, tricks and jump, the best two skiers scores counting towards their country's score. The finals are made up of the three countries with the highest overall score from the first round. Water-skiing differs from squash in that it is a sudden death sport where one mistake can ruin a skier's chances of victory. The skiers are under immense pressure therefore as are the officials who have to see that the tournament is run to the tightest of tolerances.

Although it is unheralded in the media, water-skiing is one of the country's leading medal earning sports. The British team of Mike Hazelwood, Andy Mapple, John Battleday and Karen Morse were defending the title which they had won two years previously at Princes. Their nearest rivals for the 1986 KP World Cup were likely to be Australia and the USA.

The first round, this year, started with

tricks in which the skiers have two twenty second passes in which to perform a sequence of turns on and off the boat wake to amass as many points as possible. French World Champion Patrice Martin achieved the highest score with 8900 points. Slalom was the next event in which the skiers have to round a sequence of buoys, the rope being shortened to increase the difficulty each time a pass is completed. This even looks very spectacular as the skier throws up a wall of spray at every turn as he decelerates from speeds of 60 mph to make the turn around the buoy. Team GB received a real boost here as World Record Holder Andy Mapple managed to round more buoys than anyone else.

---

### Spectators turned up in their thousands to total a viewing public of millions

---

Jumping is water-skiing's blue ribbon event, being measured purely on distance jumped, the skiers hitting a six foot ramp at up to 70 mph and kicking as high as they can to go as far as possible. Britain's Mike Hazelwood holds the current world record of 203 feet! However, it was Australia's Mick Neville who had the best score on the Saturday with a distance of 179ft although Hazelwood wasn't far behind.

After Day 1, the USA led Great Britain and Australia. Asia did not make the finals to the relief of the commentators who were having difficulty pronouncing the name of the skier Fath Wangka!

The competition also saw Princes 1st team captain John Wood in a different role. John was chief driver for the event, a position demanding accurate split second driving; it's fortunate for his opponents that this skill cannot be transferred to the "T" in match play!

The finals started in spectacular fashion as Australian Geof Carrington completed the first back somersault in his tricks score of 7280 points. His compatriot Mick Neville furthered their teams hopes with the highest score of the day despite

falling on an attempted somersault. However it was the American women who tricked the USA into an early lead after the scores had been equated to the mens by comparison to the respective world records. The strong Australian performance dropped Britain into third place.

So Britain's hopes rested on the broad shoulders of Andy Mapple in slalom and the stalwart Mike Hazelwood in jump. Mapple certainly did not let the side down, bettering his previous days score but it was America's Carl Roberge who stole the show with some aggressive skiing to beat Andy's target by 1.25 buoys.

It was down to the jump as despite Mapple's strong performance the rest of the team had not been able to lift GB from third place. Princes member Karen Morse, who supplements her winter training with regular games of squash at the club, produced a superb performance with a leap of 127 feet to help ease some of the pressure on Hazelwood. Deena Brush countered this for the USA with 134 feet to increase the pressure again. Geof Carrington had the opportunity to snatch the lead for Australia if he jumped 180 feet but could only manage 170.

Hazelwood took to the water knowing that he would have to exceed his world record for Britain to regain the title. He produced the longest jump of the day with a leap of 184 feet but even this was not enough to lift team GB from third place, the final scores being USA 4790, Australia 4574 and GB 4561.

So America took home the World Cup with a consistently strong skiing performance in all three disciplines. The tournament was heralded as one of the best seen on these shores and had produced tremendous excitement amongst the spectators.

Those squash players who fancy taking to the water themselves will be interested to know that Princes have a special beginners offer where for only £18 they guarantee to teach you to ski. This price includes wet suit hire and all equipment and if you don't get up they will refund your money. If you fancy having a go give John Wood a ring on Ashford 255330. ●