

SHOPPING IN HULL

AS WELL AS A PREMIER OCCASION FOR PLAYERS, THE BRITISH OPEN IS OFTEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHOWCASE THE LATEST SQUASH EQUIPMENT, EXHIBIT WHAT'S AVAILABLE, DEMONSTRATE PRODUCTS, LAUNCH NEW ITEMS AND SERVICES, AND EVEN FIND A FEW BARGAINS – AS IAN MCKENZIE EXPLAINS

EYE FOR A STRING



This year Eye Rackets have been appointed as the British Open's official string partner for the first time.

The company, who are new to the UK, have four-time world champion Amr Shabana as their figurehead. He uses the X.Lite 120 Control racket.

Eye also boast an ethos of supporting the core of the game with a promise to return revenue from racket sales to the "grass-roots"

Their string range, the X.Tech, comes in three gauges – 1.15mm, 1.20mm and 1.25mm – and they provide the following tip for players: "The smaller the diameter, the more power and spin can be created... however, it also breaks quicker."

The 1.20 is the most common string, as it provides a combination of power, control and durability, but the pros will go for the 1.15.

MANTIS IS OFFICIAL



The official racket at the Open is

MANTIS, another relative newcomer. They will exhibit their complete range of squash rackets and luggage in Hull, and run special deals throughout the week with the event retail partner, isquashstore.com.

They will also be organising a free competition to win a MANTIS Tour racket (rrp £120) at the event. If you can't attend, entries can be made on the Open@BOSquash Twitter page and on the MANTIS Sport@MANTISsport Twitter page.

Later in the year MANTIS will be bringing out a new

range of squash rackets, including the POWER 110 and 130, as well as PRO 115 and PRO 125. Emma Beddoes plays with the MANTIS POWER 110.

PROGRESSIVE ASICS

Although squash is not central to Asics' range, fitting into their indoor court category, they have rather by default grabbed the top end of the squash shoe market.

Players like the technological story of shoes that promise "maximum stability on the court". On display will be the new Gel-Progressive.

HI-TEC'S LEAD MAN

Hi-Tec, no longer the dominant force in the UK squash shoe market, will be using the Open to try to regain some lost territory, with triple world champion Nick Matthew leading the way.

Matthew's shoe, the V-Lite Infinity Flare, will be on display and there will be a range of special offers as well.

"The Infinity Flare is the most supportive and cushioned squash shoe I've ever had the privilege to wear," said the Yorkshireman.

HARROW ON A HIGH

For a relative newcomer to the racket market, Harrow have built up an impressive stable of players – and there will be plenty of their rackets being wielded on court in Hull.

Among the men there's Laurens Jan Anjema, Karim Abdel Gawad and Chris Simpson, while the women's list is even more impressive,

with Raneem El Welily, Low Wee Wern, Annie Au, Omneya Abdel Kawy, Kasey Brown and four-time champion Rachael Grinham contracted.

PRINCE-LY LINE-UP

There is no better line-up in squash than Prince's top four contracted players – Ramy Ashour, James Willstrop, Nicol David and Camille Serme.

Prince have a fine tradition of innovation in squash and they will be promoting their new range at the Open. All the regular favourites will be available in the village and there will be a preview of a new collection featuring an innovative new 14x15 stringing pattern.

The new models come in power levels, with Ashour's new racket – the Pro Beast Powerbite – in the 750 power band. It comes in at 128g unstrung, is evenly balanced, manoeuvrable and lively.

DUNLOP'S TEARDROP

Dunlop, who can boast both world champion Nick Matthew and world no.1 Gregory Gaultier as users of their rackets, will have plenty of bargains on show in Hull.

There may also be a sneak preview of the innovative new teardrop rackets in their range – the Biomimetic Revelation Series

125g and 135g.

Check out Matthew's Biomimetic Evolution 130, which is handcrafted with a teardrop design to provide enhanced power. Dunlop says it "maintains torsional stability through a small bridge in the throat area. This frame provides players of all levels lightweight power capability with an element of control."

Gaultier uses the Biomimetic Elite with a head light pro player frame profile. It has a widened throat area and long handle, which when combined with the standard 14x19 string pattern and oversized head, delivers considerable power.

MAGNETIC MATTHEW

Top seed Nick Matthew swears by the Eurozonebrands Trion:z magnetic bands – and spectators will be able to see why in Hull.

"I feel naked if I don't have my Trion:z on!" Matthew says. The band is said to help "improve circulation as well as relieving stiffness and pain."

GEL ON THE EDGE

Nutrition Works, a manufacturer of innovative, results-focused products for sports nutrition, will be exhibiting in the Open village.

"Our proven expertise is in formulating and manufacturing highly effective sports gels, energy gels and other products that will give you – and your customers – the edge over the competition," they state.

Their gels work in the pre-workout, intra-workout and recovery stages – in fact, nearly all areas of the sports nutrition sector. Try them out.

The exhibitors' village at the KC Stadium in Hull in 2013





Andy Whipp relaxes on the AWsome stand at the National Championships

signing, world no. 11 Tarek Momen, wearing AWsome kit. The Egyptian joins Omar Mosaad (WR13), Chris Simpson (WR22), Omar Meguid (WR30), Richie Fallows (European junior champion) and Aqeel Rehman (Austrian no.1) in the AWsome stable.

Whipp's shirts come in two fits, regular and slim. The brand is aimed at "everyone" he says. "It is high-performance kit for the average club player. And the fitted tops look absolutely amazing on the people in this world lucky enough to have an athletic figure!"

He is ambitious for his brand and plans for it to become an important fashion sportswear brand, but he will concentrate on squash first. "Squash is my passion and area of expertise," he explained.

There will be special deals at the Open and later in the year he plans a Christmas pop-up store in Manchester.

Readers can see his clothing on line at awsomesports.co.uk.

"All the products I sell – performance T-shirts – will be on display on the AWsome stand at the British Open," says former PSA Tour pro Andy Whipp.

The AWsome brand is the brainchild of Whipp, who

gave up the Tour at 22 to become a coach and then moved into designing and making sports clothing.

"The clothes are definitely better quality than everything else out there in the squash world and

certainly much more fashionable," he says.

His new range will arrive the week before the Open, so it will be displayed there for the first time.

It will also be the first tournament to have his new

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