

District Managers Report 2017

To start 2017 off the new Board were taken through the Sport Compass Governance workshop, ran by Sport Wellington. Thanks to Paddy and Andy for your time guiding the Board and I through the process. Your continued advice and support is very much appreciated.

First to address was our policies (at that time none), including Board charter, Financial & Budgeting, Health & Safety, District Manager relationship to name a few. There have been 16 adopted so far. They clearly set out the framework for our structure, so any new Board member or staff member can simply understand. These documents will be a foundation for the Squash Wellington District in the future. Thanks to John Kirkup (on behalf of the Board) for leading this project.

Squash Wellington (and the clubs) will be asked to review possible changes to constitutions (Wellington & New Zealand), and I urge you all to get involved and offer your feedback to this process in 2018. These documents will be updated to meet the needs of modern day sport.

Following the 2016 club survey and AGM we have focused on encouraging and growing participation.

Most clubs by the end of 2017 have some form of Junior program. Some are very structured programs, run by a professional resource; while others are volunteer coaches/parents run programs. Both models work in keeping with our view that all clubs are different! It's encouraging to see the crossover between clubs and having them share ideas. I thank all of you in this area.

Competitive Squash

Moving into competitive play, starting with the HEAD 9hundy & below series. Yet another successful year of 7 tournaments spread around the District. The children (and parents) love the format of 3 matches within the space of 4 or 5 hours. The average participation level at the events was 40 players per round. Thanks again to clubs, Junior convenors and parents for making these events such a success.

Following on from the 9hundy series, we ran Junior interclub, using a similar format from the previous 2 years. Over 110 participants (an average of 36 players per round) competed, with Mana Squash club taking away the 2017 Junior interclub trophy. One learning was that many kids and parents would prefer more than one game (positive from 9hundy series) on the day. We may look to run double headers on 4 chosen Sundays in 2018. This would utilise a similar format to the rounds at Masterton and Red Star that worked so well. We could then have one round in the morning and one round in the afternoon.

The open junior series, has seen less players compete again this year, (average participation of 30) mainly due to competing sporting commitments on weekends and more proficient players preferring to play senior tournaments. We are looking at other potential initiatives to replace this series in 2018. The key, as always, is to identify something that will generate good levels of participation. We would like to see clubs running Masters and Juniors tournaments together. As Kapiti Squash Club ran this format with success last year.

Thanks once again to the team at HEAD for sponsoring our Junior program for 2017. Your relationship is valued, and we are excited about continuing to work together.

Interclub

Autumn, Winter, and Spring competitions were run again this year.

To encourage Women’s squash, we ran a trial in the Spring competition, where teams were made up of only three players. Whilst this did initially reduce the player-points differential across the competition, there was one less team entered than in the Winter competition. The general feedback was that this was not well received as the sociability factor had been removed: one person playing, one marking and the other changing. Overall, the trial was not a success.

In the Men’s open Spring competition, we trialled PAR 11 scoring and playing the team in points order. There was some strong opposition around the clubs, some stating that if PAR 11 became the standard, they would lose competitive players. Nonetheless the trial went ahead, and the feedback to date suggests that the shorter games (not so good) resulted in an earlier finish, which, if travelling, was much appreciated. Comment was also made that PAR11 would have a major detrimental impact on the lower Women’s grades. Positive comments have been received about playing in points order.

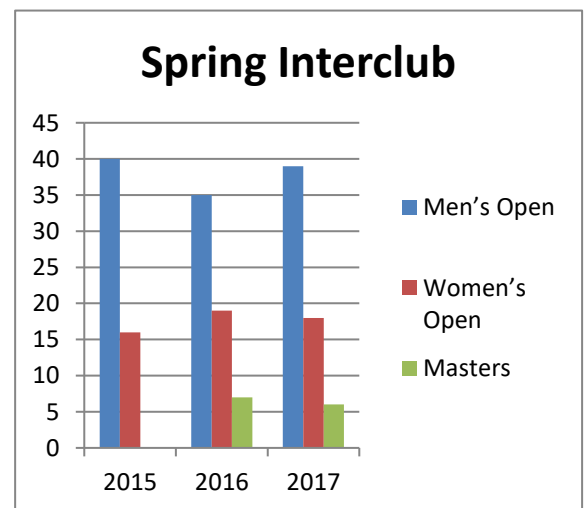
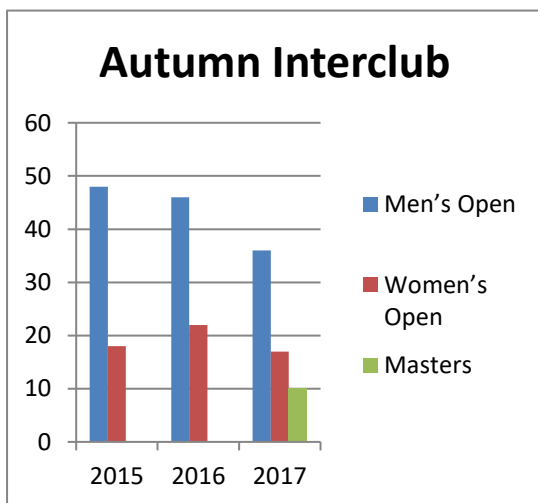
Travel, and therefore defaults did not seem to be as contentious as in the past; and any legitimate defaults (weather) were rescheduled to the end of the programme.

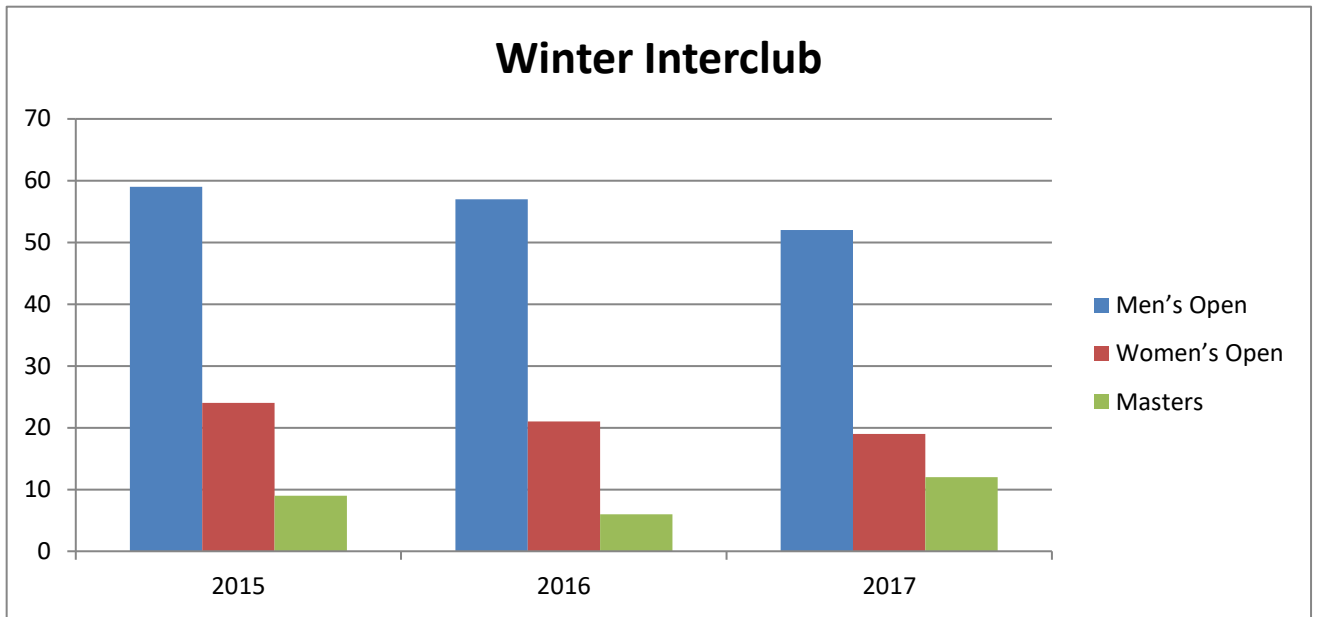
Thanks to all the Club Administrators, for their forbearance, feedback, and assistance throughout the year.

Lastly to Tony Nelson who has been interclub convenor for many years, Thank you! Your work facilitating Interclub is outstanding. We have a fantastic partnership.

As many of you will know, Tony is happy to step aside. So, If there is anyone out there who would be interested in taking on the Interclub convenor role, please let me know!

The following is a comparison of the teams entered in each of the three competitions over the past three seasons and would show a trend for squash to become a year round sport as the Spring and Autumn competitions expand, whilst Winter contracts.





Trophy Winner:

Squash @ Upper Hutt

Superchamps

Superchamps once again proved to be the #1 competition in the land. We had 34 teams overall; comprising of

	Men	Women
B	4	1
C	8	4
D	6	4
E	4	3

Apart from the B Grade women's winner, all other teams competed in the National finals; with distinction I might add. Congratulations to the Tawa E grade mens team who won the National title. With young Oliver Dunbar (age 11) bringing the team home in the final match, and in 5 sets.

We again represented Wellington at Junior and Senior team's events. We didn't have sufficient numbers that met criteria to send a masters team. We hope the players rally around each other to enable us to have a team compete in 2018.

National Competition

Onto the results. 2017 was the first year the Senior teams event was split away from individuals (which was played over the 3 days prior). The event started on Friday and finished on Saturday evening. There were 8 Mens districts and 6 Womens Districts. Our mens team won, beating Auckland after locking 2 matches all. Wellington 8 games won, Auckland 6. The women's team came a credible 3rd. The event was very well run by Squash Eastern and Hawkes Bay squash club. The feedback is that this was a success, and we will likely see this new format continue. Definitely something Districts, teams and players can build on.

Our Junior teams had a fresh, young look in 2017. Most of the athletes were aged between 14-16, so have a few years left in juniors, which is a good sign for the future. We'd like to extend our compliments to all the players as they all have great attitudes too. Thanks to Nick Mita for coaching and mentoring the players through. Especially to those players that played 9 matches over the 6 days! To Gareth Fleming and Vicky Webster, thanks for looking after the players off the court and being great support. Well done to you all.

Congratulations to Charlotte Galloway, Kobe Fleming and Dora Galloway for making NZ junior squads. Evan Williams and Scott Galloway were also included in the NZ elite squad, which is a great achievement.

Well done to Evan Williams for selection in the 2017 NZ world mens team and Sam Atkins for selection in the NZ Masters team.

Sportsville Update

Fraser Park Sportsville is now becoming a reality, with the commencement of the building in June. There is still a shortfall of \$2.1million. The CFT (Community Facilities Trust) plan is to fundraise the remaining



shortfall while the building is under construction. At risk are the 6 squash courts that could be fitted out later. All parties are 100% committed to having the squash courts fully operational on opening day.

The squash fraternity were asked to pledge funds for the construction. The Squash Wellington Board have committed to \$20,000. Along with Squash New Zealand (\$30,000) and Mitchell Park Squash (\$50,000). There is also an opportunity to raise more funds (significant) with our contribution.

It's an exciting time for Hutt Valley Squash (Fraser and Mitchell Park clubs), Squash in our region and beyond. These courts should be operational by March 2019.

Finance

Financially it has been a satisfactory year. I am always grateful to the funding organisations who are generous supporters of what we do. Income from these grants are similar to previous years, though the process can take a little longer to confirm (some not take multiple applications).

My thanks go to NZCT, Lion Foundation, Pelorus trust, Infinity Foundation and First Sovereign. Without your support we would struggle to exist.

Sponsorship is again difficult to attract, though we are very fortunate to have HEAD (Racquets and apparel) and Crombie Lockwood (BounceBack insurance scheme) continue our long-standing relationship. Thanks to Craig (HEAD) and Gary (Crombie) for your support. These sponsors provide us with tangible benefits to squash in our district, so we do encourage you to support these sponsors by at least investigating what they could provide to you. .

Sport – Looking ahead

I would like to touch on the culture of our sport, and probably all sport across the board. It is an ever-changing environment, with money tight, opportunities a plenty (and often cheaper than before) and people busier than ever before. Sport is becoming more difficult to run. Ultimately sport is being driven by the participants, and if we don't meet the needs then sport will fall away. It is becoming more and more common that clubs (or clusters) are running inhouse, business house or summer leagues to meet the demands of participants. I applaud you for running such programs, and maybe these type of small block 'events' will become more common. Underpinning this, is the squash community working together. Be it club or player level.

You never know; we could all become 'one club' like the City Fitness (Gym) model. This model is certainly a change to how it was done in the 'good ol'days' but, with the way sport in general is going, maybe it is a more sustainable one?

SW Board

To our Squash Wellington Board, thank for your time and commitment to our District. It often goes unrewarded, especially with the challenging year we have had. I thank you

Lastly, thanks to all the volunteers that help RUN and DELIVER our sport, day in, day out. You are all fantastic, and our sport of Squash is nowhere without you.

Swing smooth

Willie Bicknell