



SQUASH
WELLINGTON

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**ANNUAL CHAIR
& DM REPORT
2020**

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CHAIRS REPORT

The Year in Review

On behalf of the Squash Wellington Board, it is with pleasure that I present the Chairwomen Report.

Since being elected Chairwomen in June 2020 it has been a busy second half of the year, thanks to New Zealand moving into Level 2 from May 2020.

I know it is not lost on any of us how lucky we are to effectively be back in business with a full tournament calendar while other countries are still some ways from restrictions being lifted. Our thoughts continue to be with them, including family members of our squash community here in New Zealand.

I would like to acknowledge all our clubs and members for the incredible work that has gone into keeping our clubs a safe and healthy place to be.

It was warming to see all the creative ways clubs stayed connected during lock down as well as ways to offer support to their members. One initiative that comes to mind is from Tawa Squash Club. Recognising that some members might find themselves in a position where they might have to suspend their membership because of COVID 19, members were invited to donate to a fund to help members who might have needed help. This is just one example of how our people went out of their way to help others. It truly takes a village.

National Achievements

Despite the limited amount of court time available in the better part of the first half of the year there were some fantastic team and individual results. A massive congratulations to the following players and teams.

New Zealand Representatives	Diana Galloway - Hutt City Squash
New Zealand Junior Team	Campbell Webster - Hutt City Squash
National SuperChamps Champions	Kapiti Squash B Grade Ladies Mana Squash E Grade Mens
National Age Group Title	Maiden-Lee Coe - Mana Squash Club
Under 15 National Girls Champion	
National Individual Champion	Evan Williams - Hutt City Squash

Team District Representative Squads

A casualty of the global pandemic, the 2020 Senior District teams' event was cancelled. It was however great to see some Team events continue later in the year. Our Juniors and Masters competed hard at their respective events.

- Junior Girls - Placed 3rd (Seeded 3rd)
- Junior Boys - Placed 7th (Seeded 10th)
- Masters - Placed 7th (Seeded 5th)

Congratulations everyone!

Volunteers – we thank you!

I don't need to tell you how vital the role of volunteers play across all our clubs is. Whether you sit on your Club Committee to assisting by supporting club initiatives to grow squash in your communities through to manning the kitchen, bar, coaching or tournament control during tournaments; you are the backbone of our sport and we thank you for your service, to your club and our sport.

It was also fantastic to see one of our own, Myles Sayer of Island Bay Tennis and Squash club awarded the National Volunteer of the Year award at the Squash New Zealand Awards evening at the end of 2020. Congratulations Myles and thank you for your continued dedication to our sport.

I would also like to acknowledge members of our clubs who support the delivery of and drive the Squash Wellington initiatives such as the Women and Junior HEAD series and the annual Squash Wellington Senior, Junior and Masters Opens. Your time and effort are very much appreciated, thank you.

Setting up for Success – The Year Ahead

Our key objectives for 2021 will continue to focus on Growth and Participation. We'll achieve this through focusing on the following Strategic Areas.

Participation & Promotion

- Growing awareness and participation in squash through a competitive and social lens.

Court related skill development

- Lifting coaching, player, and refereeing capability and capacity so that we can maintain a pipeline of talent and resources.

Sustainability

- Future proofing squash through appropriate infrastructure and off court skill development.

We've started with great gusto having stood up a Masters Working Group to focus on developing Master's initiatives to encourage greater Masters participation across our region.

We've also launched some new programmes and initiatives such as Pathway to District Referee Programme, Squash Your Way Social Media Campaign, and our recently launched District Newsletter, "In the *Swing*".

In addition, Wellington will be hosting some significant National events starting with The New Zealand National Championships followed by the New Zealand Senior National Inter-District Team Championships, both hosted by Hutt City Squash Club. Then later in the year Tawa and Mana Squash Clubs will co-host the New Zealand Masters Individual and District Teams events.

Exciting times ahead!

The Wrap

As are our Clubs predominately reliant on club volunteers, it's often these same volunteers who also volunteer to give back by sitting on the Squash Wellington Board. We are also fortunate to have a paid employee through our District Manager.

With that I would like to acknowledge and thank the Squash Wellington Board members, Catharine Sayer, Brett Simon, Bradley Watts, and Darrin Galliers. While we have navigated some challenging hurdles throughout the year your focus on the future of our sport, because of your passion, has been unwavering. Thank you for your valued contribution throughout the year.

Thank you also to our District Manager, William Bicknell, for your continued hard work for our District. You have been a great constant and reliable source of knowledge and assistance to our wider community. Thank you, Willie.

Wishing you all a safe and successful 2021 season.

Best wishes,

Ann Smith
Chair, Squash Wellington Board

DISTRICT MANAGERS REPORT

2020 began with excitement. A new annual plan was unveiled. There were new initiatives, such as exploring partnering with Kelly Sports to deliver squash to schools. To help us achieve the funding, we contracted a grant funding services provider. 2020 was looking likely to be a positive step forward for Squash in the Capital.

Enter COVID-19, and everything changed. Quickly. By mid-March the country was in lockdown. Most were confined to their homes. There was uncertainty around the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders, jobs, the economy. That important past time for so many New Zealanders, sport, was stopped dead in its tracks.

WFH (Working from Home) probably became the most used phrase of 2020. People still needed to communicate and see other people. Enter 'Zoom', and other, similar, options. Sport NZ/Sport Wellington were quick to host stakeholder meetings giving sporting organisations, clubs, and players a personal update via Zoom. The theme of their meetings is "we are in survival mode".

The Government/Sport NZ acknowledged that the pandemic would have impacts on sporting clubs. They introduced a 'resilience fund' for all sporting organisations to apply to for fixed costs. Squash Wellington (SW) was fortunate to obtain reimbursement on fixed costs. SW also applied for, and obtained, the wage subsidy. This provided relief due to the shortfall in class 4 gaming grants due to all pubs and clubs being shut.

In May clubs were able to open their doors again, in at least some limited capacity. Interclub and tournaments commenced again in June, following a revised version of the 2020 Calendar. SW would like to thank the district for working together to ensure that all clubs had the opportunity to host events given the short timeframe caused by the lockdowns. Thanks must also go to the players who ensured that tournaments, interclub and super champs all had fantastic participation. Looking back, in March, there were questions about whether we would even see any sport in 2020.

Driving Participation

Most clubs had some form of Junior programme and adult starters/club nights for new participants to attend. This is an outstanding result and clubs have done well establishing or continuing running these programmes. Also, it is encouraging to see the crossover between clubs and the way they are sharing ideas.

HEAD 9hundy & below series

Again, we ran the 9hundy and below series, with 5 tournaments spread across the District. We did have a drop of participants, down 25% to 64 players in 2020. This could simply be down to timing, and the impacts of COVID generating a more congested calendar with social and sporting events resuming.

Overall, 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.

HEAD Women's 800 (points and below) series

Thankfully, we were able to run the Women's 800 below series. Hosts were, Thorndon Martinborough, Tawa and Khandallah. Special thanks to all those clubs that have driven the initiative and provided a warm, welcome and friendly atmosphere for all 42 participants.

It is fantastic to see many of these players transitioning into our historic competition formats including interclub, SuperChamps and tournaments.

Thanks once again to the team at HEAD for sponsoring our Junior and Women's programmes; Your support is valued, and we are excited to continue working together in 2021.

Competitive Squash

Interclub

With the spread of COVID, Autumn interclub was cancelled after the first round. By late May it became clear we would be able to run winter interclub under level 2 restrictions. It was decided in conjunction with clubs to run one competition with finals and not incorporate the normal Spring competition. The competition started mid-June and ran until the end of September.

Our records show that the number of entries were well up on the previous winter interclub numbers. This was likely due to the 3-month hiatus in competitions available to players.

We continued the change of having four teams in a division for Women's Winter interclub to stimulate more even competition. We believe that this change has helped grow the number of women playing. We reached 20 teams in 2020 and I had to purchase a new trophy for Division 5! Well done to all involved. The uptake of players does show that the effort put in with the women's game is proving to be working in terms of growing participation and competition.

Following the interclub survey in 2019 and the need to focus on good communication with opposing teams on travel, potential team numbers and whether supper is being provided has proved to be making the competition a far more enjoyable event. We will run another survey at the end of 2021 and compare to the 2019 results. I would like to thank Nicola Ward-Thomas for her time and commitment on administering interclub over a difficult season, not knowing if we will ever complete it; Your openness and timely manner in responding to responses is much appreciated.

Winter interclub numbers		
YEAR	2020	2019
Mens	47	36
Womens	20	16
Masters	4	3
TOTALS	71	55



**Trophy Winner:
Hutt City Squash Club**

Hutt City Squash entered 9 teams, won 5 divisions and had 2 seconds.

Darin Galliers trailed a new concept with Master Interclub. The format was targeted at D&E grade, as these are often the grades that we see fall away from the competitive scene, at least at Masters level. The format involved all teams of each grade playing at the same venue each week, with finals of both grades being played at Hutt City Squash. It was an outstanding pilot, with feedback incredibly positive. The next step is incorporating this concept into interclub in the 2021 season. There are some challenges given how busy the squash calendar, including the weekdays.

SuperChamps

Thankfully COVID didn't affect the dates of this event and was scheduled as planned, with district playoffs at the end of July and national playoffs at the end of September. Again, this even continues to be huge part of competition framework, with an amazing 50 teams entered, up 10 from 2019.

Breakdown of numbers:

	Men	Women
B	6	5
C	9	5
D	6	5
E	8	3

We had teams compete in all the National finals. On top of the Crombie Lockwood travel sponsorship, Squash Wellington also provided \$2400 worth of coaching to all 8 teams heading to the national finals. Well done to

Kapiti B Grade women and Mana E Grade men for winning their national finals! Thanks to Gary at Crombie Lockwood for your continued support.

National Competition Senior inter-District teams

The event, which was due to be held at Hutt City, was cancelled due to COVID. Many Districts couldn't afford to attend this year and it was decided to cancel in 2020 and the event has been rescheduled at Hutt City Squash in 2021.

The New Zealand individual championships

Held at the end of October at North Shore Squash club. A number of Wellington players participated, with a number of supporters all making the trip too. Which was well worth it as Evan Williams too out his first men's open title. A tremendous reward for all the hard work he has put in over the years. Well done Ev!

Junior Team at National Squash Centre

We are lucky to have a respectful and helpful group of players - They all made an effort to support each other during individuals and the teams event.

Highlight of individuals was Maiden-Lee Coe winning the under 15 New Zealand title.

Moving on to the teams event, the Boys teams - we were seeded 10th, and 5th in Division 2 pool (they split it this year due to time restrictions and a clear gap in seedings) The team only losing one of their ties and finishing 7th overall.

The Girls teams - Seed 3rd, made the final 3 playoff against 1 and 2 seeds quite easily. Their opponents were Auckland and Waikato and was ever going to be easy, finishing 3rd.

Having such a young group of players, we are looking good for more podium finishes in the future.

Thanks to Jackie Steventon and Nick Attree for managing (and feeding) the team.

Lastly, to Evan Willimas for coaching and mentoring the players, we are very lucky to have Evans knowledge and professionalism leading this program.

Masters in Whangarei

The Wellington Masters Team was made up of regulars and newbies and even had a player coach, Matt Green, who was kept busy between games providing great advice. All players were honored and proud to be there representing Wellington. Unfortunately, there was a last-minute withdrawal of one of our top players, Sam Atkins, which was due to his partner going into labour earlier than planned. The team's event was well

attended and had 9 Districts out of a possible 11 with Wellington seeded 5th. Four matches played over 2 days, with the team finishing a credible 7th. Thanks Dennis Siefe and Jeanne Yells for organizing and managing the team.

Promotion

World Squash Day 20/10/20

For some of our dual clubs with Tennis, this date worked well as it fell on the same weekend as the 'Love Tennis' campaign. Many of those clubs had coordinated promotions. Many ran their club championships on the same weekend to ensure there was a busy vibe over the weekend. We also contracted Myles Sayer to weave his magic coming up with a shirt design we could all wear and promote. The shirt was a fantastic hit, with 2 orders being placed and a total of 114 shirts distributed.



Club Hui

Following on from previous surveys and the need to share ideas and work together, we held our first ever Club Hui. The theme of the meeting was on ideas to grow our game, including updating of facilities, encouraging, and engaging with volunteers. We had 'Easy' discuss how Thorndon went about funding and installing 2 glass front walls, due to the condition of the plaster on the front walls. Nicole (Thorndon) spoke on the need to change, move around and refresh volunteers as it was good for both sides. One to reduce volunteer burnout and to keep delivery of programs fresh. Scott from Mana spoke on what he and the committee had done at Mana, with the installation of electronic scoring, roofing insulation and painting of the lounge. He also talked about how successful he has been with funding of these and other projects. Mana have received \$50k of funding over the past 15 months.

A fantastic initiative. Thanks to Ann Smith and Catharine Sayer for facilitating and all the clubs and attendees.

Finance

We had a net loss for the year to 31 December 2020 of \$5,346. The loss for the year is mainly on the back of reduced funding due to COVID-19 and we gave clubs a 2-month rebate on affiliation fees to help them with their finances. SW was able to offset these losses in revenue by applying for COVID-19 wage subsidies through Ministry of Social Development and the resilience fund offered through Sport Wellington. Expenditure has been kept in check to match the reduced income levels. With Senior national teams' event being

cancelled, this assisted in reducing expenditure. I should note the Masters teams entirely self-funded to attend the NZ Masters.

With class 4 gaming funding becoming available later in the year, we were incredibly grateful to receive grants from Pub Charity (Coaching) and Lion Foundation (toward District Managers salary).

We are extremely fortunate to have HEAD (Racquets and apparel) and Crombie Lockwood (BounceBack insurance scheme) continue our long-standing relationships. Thanks to Craig & Juls (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 Great

I would like to touch on the culture of our sport, and probably all sport across the board. It is an ever-changing environment; we are adapting and will continue to do so. 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 programmes, 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.

SW Board

To the Squash Wellington Board, thanks for your time and commitment to our District. It often goes unrewarded, especially in the challenging times for sport. I would like to thank Ann Smith, Brett Simon, Catharine Sayer, Barry Ryan (resigned March), Brad Watts and Darin Galliers for their contributions and time on the Board.

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

William Bicknell
District Manager
Squash Wellington