



SQUASH WELLINGTON

ANNUAL REPORT

2021



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Squash Wellington wish to express our gratitude for the support of the following funders, sponsors and supports.



CHAIR REPORT

There are two well-known phrases or whakatauki that come to mind in writing this report:

- + Titiro whakamuri, Kokiri whakamua - Look back and reflect so that you can move forward.
- + The only thing that remains constant is change.

The only thing that remains constant is change. It means that the world is always changing and so are people. Not only is change always constant, but it is also unavoidable. Change is hard and at times uncomfortable, but change is normal. Changing the way we would normally do things can be difficult and requires patience, support, effort, planning and resilience. Yet change is also healthy; it gives us something to strive for.

This past year has been the very definition of change. There has been a lot of uncertainty, and the continual need to adapt to the changing Covid landscape, so on reflection there is also so much we can be proud of. We continue to see and hear the desire for our people to enjoy the sport we all love and the way that our clubs have enabled that in different ways has been amazing.

Our 2020 district survey suggested many players had never heard of Squash Wellington. So that players understand who is behind many of the events they participate in and know who to come to with their suggestions, offers of assistance, questions, praise and even complaints, this year the Board put significant focus on lifting district squash players' awareness of Squash Wellington. We did this by upping our game on social media (Facebook and Instagram), by making regular and engaging posts about all sorts of district squash activity, and launching In the SWing, our monthly newsletter accessed via Facebook and email.

We have received extremely positive feedback about our engagement this year, in particular that people feel far more connected to other clubs and the squash community generally. We are proud that during 2021, when many people felt isolated from whānau, friends and colleagues through lockdowns and distancing, we were able to make people feel more connected to squash than ever before. Having active platforms that showcase the enjoyment received from the best sport in the world was so important to us that we created a new district award to recognise its importance!

While we saw a lot of events cancelled in 2021, including some national events scheduled to be held in Wellington, our clubs continued to find different ways to keep members and their communities informed and engaged. Some examples of this were through regular and clear communications, adaption to club days and events enabling people to continue to play in a safe and managed environment. Even changing tournaments from 2-3 days to a 1-day tournament as Island Bay trialled.

We were thrilled at the effort made by several clubs to raise mental health awareness through squash for World Squash Day - and significant funds were raised for the Mental Health Foundation too - well done whānau!

CHAIR REPORT

As the environment changed again in the last quarter of 2021, we were able to host two national events at Hutt City Squash. Players and supporters adapted well to new ways of working and I believe that holding these events was a strong signal to the wider community that we can continue to showcase and grow our game, just in slightly different ways. Change is constant.

The Squash Wellington Board also experienced change. We welcomed new co-opted members, Malcolm Thomas from Tawa, and Greg Grant from Khandallah on the Board following the last AGM with their co-opted terms ending at the 2022 AGM.

One of our most noticeable changes was saying farewell to Willie Bicknell in August after working for Squash Wellington for 10 years: a constant figure in our community with a wealth of squash knowledge across our region, well respected within it and beyond. Change can be unsettling but it also provides us with opportunities to welcome fresh eyes and perspectives in a constantly changing environment. To that end, we welcomed Russell Henderson into an interim role as District Administrator while a more permanent role was being scoped.

I would like to acknowledge the entire Board: Catharine Sayer, Malcolm Thomas, and Greg Grant for their hard work behind the scenes. We have had to make some tough decisions as a result of Covid, including its variant strains. These decisions are never taken lightly but always with our members at front of mind.

Our thanks to Russell: his energy and pragmatic approach has guided our clubs through a number of changes through the Covid traffic light system and most recently CPF. It hasn't been an easy task but actioned with urgency and consideration of the different needs of our clubs and their members. This has not gone unnoticed by all of us so thank you Russell.

The Board also extends its gratitude to our volunteers that support the administration of our programmes and initiatives. Nicola-Ward Thomas, Interclub Convenor, and Bryan Smith, Masters Convenor, who work tirelessly behind the scenes to deliver some of our in demand activities.

Lastly, we must acknowledge all the clubs, their Presidents, Committees, staff, volunteers, and members. It has been another disruptive year, a longer than usual season has seen clubs and their members extend their events and support longer than usual. Change can be difficult and requires patience and resilience. You have all done an exceptional job, thank you for your amazing work.

Ann Smith
Chair, Squash Wellington Board

BOARD MEMBERS



Ann Smith
Hutt City



Malcolm Thomas
Tawa



Greg Grant
Khandallah



Catharine Sayer
Island Bay

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Starting my post as District Administrator in mid-September, I was able to enjoy the final few months of the season, albeit with a few inevitable postponements and cancellations.

I want to thank the many individuals - Club Captains, Presidents, Committee Members, SW Board Members, Convenors, and players - across the Wellington district who welcomed me to the fold and helped me find my feet; there was a lot to learn (and still is!), and Willie left some very big shoes to fill. Your patience and generous sharing of knowledge, expertise, and love for the sport has been hugely appreciated.

It is immensely satisfying to look back over all of our district's achievements in 2021, and also to look ahead to this year's season, which is now well underway.

Linking in to Squash NZ's Strategic Direction, it is great to see our provision covering everything from foundation level (HEAD 800, HEAD 9Hundy), all the way through to high performance (District Representative Teams), with a great deal of activity in between.

Russell Henderson
Squash Wellington, District Administrator



PERFORMANCE



NZ Senior Individual – Oliver Sport NZ Squash Classic

Due to Covid, the NZ Seniors and Teams events were cancelled and replaced with the Oliver Sport NZ Classic and NZ Senior Teams Classic.

NZ Senior Classic, held at Hutt City, saw the top 32 domestic players compete in the two-day tournament. Wellington was well represented across both men's and women's draws with the current New Zealand Champion, Evan Williams leading the men's draw. Typically playing big title matches in other cities it was great to be able to support Evan and other Wellington players on our home turf in Wellington. The last Senior Nationals held in Wellington was 1971 so it was great to host this event, for the players and for the district.

After moving through the 32 draw relatively comfortably, Evan went on to secure yet another title 3-1. A magnificent achievement continuing an unbeaten streak since 2020.

Congratulations also to the following Wellington players who competed at the tournament. It was fantastic to see so many of our players involved over the weekend.

Women	Men
Diana Galloway (Mana) Maiden-Lee Coe (Mana) Hannah Grimmett (Ōtaki) Gemma Gee (Hutt City) Samantha Douglas (Hutt City) Mackenzie Tait (Masterton) Emma Sanchez-Brown (Hutt City) Emma Thorpe (Hutt City)	Jonathan Barnett (Hutt City) Sam Atkins (Thorndon) Luke Tough (Thorndon) James Thompson (Khandallah) Oliver Dunbar (Tawa) Brian Tapurau (Hutt City) Cameron Scott (Kāpiti) Connor Plumley (Kāpiti)



Performance

NZ Junior and Masters Individual and Inter-District Team events

After the successful delivery of the new squad programmes across Junior, Senior and Masters groups, the tough decision was made to cancel the Junior and Masters Individual and Inter-district events owing to Covid.

While the Junior event did not go ahead, we acknowledge the players that were selected in the Wellington 2021 Junior Representative team.

GIRLS	BOYS
Maiden-Lee Coe (Mana) Mackenzie Tait (Masterton) Claudia Hawkes (Red Star) Hannah Du Toit (Thorndon) Kyra Wyeth (Red Star)	Mark Steventon (Martinborough) Oliver Dunbar (Tawa) Otis Brown (Island Bay) Shay Gannon (Mana) Cass Attree (Mana)

NZ Senior Team Classic

Hutt City hosted another national event late October, a modified version of the traditional Senior Inter-Districts event. Wellington Men's and Women's senior representative teams were joined by five other districts in competing in some thrilling ties over the course of the weekend.

Following the individual event, the previous month, it was fantastic to see teams go head-to-head, with our Women's team finishing strong - from bottom seed to fourth overall. While our



Men's team went in as number one seeds, they finished second behind a very strong Bay of Plenty team with Bay of Plenty also taking the Women's title.

Overall, everyone, and especially the players, were just thrilled to get back on court and both events were a great example of adapting to new ways of operating with Covid.

Congratulations Team Wellington!

WOMEN	MEN
Maiden-Lee Coe (Mana) Hannah Grimmett (Ōtaki) Gemma Gee (Hutt City) Abby Wotten (Tawa) Samantha Douglas (Hutt City)	Evan Williams (Hutt City) Jonathan Barnett (Hutt City) Sam Atkins (Thorndon) Matt Green (Tawa) Kayne Espinosa (Hutt City)

Performance



Wellington Development Squads

This year we introduced three new district player development programmes catering to Juniors, Seniors, and Masters. The programmes delivered on one of our strategic priorities under Court-Related Skill Development and are the cornerstone of our regional representative structure which aims to lift our player capability.

The Junior and Senior programmes were held over a 10-month period and delivered by the Evan Williams Coaching team, led by Evan Williams. Integrated within the 10-month programme were specialist services such as sessions with nutrition and fitness professionals. Each carefully planned camp was designed to give participants the technical and tactical skills and support to progress along the representative pathway and was well subscribed by over 40 players. They were also designed to build up player camaraderie, bonding and district 'belonging', to encourage players to play for each other rather than as individuals.

The Masters programme, led by Matt Green, was very well subscribed with over 20 players across the region signing up. Held over a 5-month period with players ranging from D-A grade the camps combined technical and tactical skills suitable for all, plus a lot of fun and laughter was had.

In addition to their unique programming, both camps included match analysis to complement the physical aspect of the programme. Aimed at growing the whole player physically, mentally, and tactically, the informal and formal feedback we received overwhelmingly supported a continuation of the overall model.



Performance



Wellington Development Squads continued

Each Junior, Senior and Masters camp was supported by a session plan and a written post-camp review and Squash Wellington made sure to give all district players insight into squad membership, activity, and representative squad selections by regularly posting social media content.

We would like to acknowledge the Evan Williams Coaching and Matt Green Coaching teams for their expertise and robust programmes that laid out a great platform on which we can continue to build for the future.

District Champions

Some new and familiar names were etched on our main District Championships this season. A great display of nail-biting squash, including some thrilling finals, occurred so well done everyone and congratulations to this year's Champions.

Wellington Open: Evan Williams def. Willz Donnelly – Kaitlyn Watts def. Tamsyn Leevey

Wellington Jr Open: Tom Marshall def. Oliver Dunbar – Maiden-Lee Coe def. Kiera Thompson

Wellington Masters: Matt Green def. Cameron Scott – Nicki Gibbs def. Claire Coleman

Our thanks to all the volunteers of the host clubs, Khandallah Tennis & Squash, Kāpiti and Mana for putting on a great weekend for all the players and supporters.



HONOURS

Significant Achievements

Despite the stop-start season there were still some significant achievements across our district; regional and national acknowledgements were celebrated.

Our congratulations to all players and their support teams.

Recipient	Award
Diana Galloway (Mana)	Hutt Valley DHB Young Sportswoman of the Year
Maiden-Lee Coe (Mana)	Wellington College Sports Award – Squash Player of the Year
Oliver Dunbar (Tawa)	Wellington College Sports Award – Squash Player of the Year
Diana Galloway	U19 2021 North Island Champion
Oliver Dunbar	U15 2021 North Island Champion
Eamon Gannon (Mana)	U11 2021 North Island Champion
Diana Galloway	U19 2021 South Island Champion
Maiden-Lee Coe	U17 2021 South Island Champion
Mackenzie Tait (Masterton)	U15 2021 South Island Champion
Eamon Gannon	U11 South Island Champion
Diana Galloway	NZ Elite NZ Trans-Tasman Team – event cancelled due to COVID
Maiden-Lee Coe	NZ Elite NZ Trans-Tasman Team – event cancelled due to COVID
Mackenzie Tait	NZ Secondary Schools Team – event cancelled due to COVID

AWARDS

As usual, it was a night for squashies across the whole district to come together to celebrate the season's highlights. Many thanks to the Ricoh Centre Fraser Park Sportville for hosting this most glamorous event in the Wellington squash scene and our District Administrator for the professional touch brought to the audio-visual display and the new trophies.

We extend our special congratulations to Matt Green who, after winning the district coach title, won the Squash New Zealand National Coach of the Year award.

Award	Recipient	Award	Recipient
<i>Club of the Year</i>	Khandallah Tennis & Squash	<i>Supreme Woman of the Year</i>	Maiden-Lee Coe
<i>Team of the Year</i>	Island Bay E-Grade Superchamps	<i>Supreme Man of the Year</i>	Evan Williams
<i>Volunteer of the Year</i>	Kath Greenhough	<i>Junior Girl of the Year</i>	Maiden-Lee Coe
<i>Referee of the Year</i>	Brett Simon	<i>Junior Boy of the Year</i>	Oliver Dunbar
<i>Coach of the Year</i>	Matt Green	<i>Masters Woman of the Year</i>	Nicki Gibbs
<i>Jade Wilson Memorial</i>	Ann Smith	<i>Masters Man of the Year</i>	Matt Green
<i>Initiative of the Year</i>	Mana Summer League	<i>Most Improved Players Junior Girl / Boy</i>	Sophia DeNardi-Gonzalez, Ben Jones
<i>Best use of social media</i>	Island Bay Facebook	<i>Most Improved Players Senior Woman/Man</i>	Kayla Scott Harman Brar
<i>Slazenger Cup</i>	Khandallah Tennis & Squash Club	<i>Most Competitive Player</i>	Damien Hickling
<i>Most Competitive Club</i>	Hutt City		

EVENTS & INITIATIVES



HEAD 9hundy & below series

This series once again gave junior players an opportunity to participate in competitive squash, in a fun and welcoming environment. We saw another drop off in numbers – again around 25% – to 47 players. This could be down to a number of reasons, but hopefully we can get more juniors playing and get those numbers back up soon.

Huge thanks to our host clubs – Mana, Red Star, Khandallah, Island Bay, Kāpiti and Hutt City, and to the Junior Convenors for organising the events and making the participants feel welcome.

And of course, a big thank you to the players and their parents for coming along and getting involved.

Congratulations to the **2021 HEAD 9HUNDY series Champion, Eamon Gannon.**

HEAD Women's 800 series

The HEAD 800 series was again well received, with an increase from four rounds in 2020 to five in 2021.

For the fourth year running, this series continues to provide a friendly introduction to competition for many women. It also provides the perfect preparation for Interclub, Superchamps, and district tournaments for those who want to take their competitive play to the next level.

A big thanks to our host clubs – Thorndon, Martinborough, Kāpiti, Mana, and Khandallah – for providing a warm welcome to our players.

And a big thank you to HEAD for their support, and of course for all the great swag!



Congratulations to the **2021 HEAD800 Womens series Champion, Rebekah Anderson**



Events & Initiatives

TOTALFlow Masters of Masters Series

Another new initiative that became very popular, with registrations growing each tournament and exceeding one-off masters' events run in the past.

Points were accumulated over a series of 5 club tournaments with the overall champions determined on cumulative series scores. It was a fantastic initiative to cater to our vibrant masters community supported by players from all clubs across our district. It was great to see some clubs run their first very first Masters tournament and more are coming on board for the 2022 season.

The women's champion was Riana Rossouw from Tawa and the men's champion was Kent Hawkins from Hutt City – congratulations!



Thanks to the Sinclair family for crafting and donating the amazing trophies for this series. Special thanks to Bryan Smith, Masters Convenor for the hard work that went behind the scenes liaising with all the tournament controllers on logistics and tracking over 70 players' points after each tournament.

Our gratitude also to our series sponsor, TOTALFlow Plumbing. Your support was invaluable in getting this new initiative launched!



Interclub

We were pleased to see the return of an Ōtaki women's team, Ōtaki Poipatu to the Interclub scene. The Ōtaki wahine (Ngāti Raukawa) made friends across the district not just with their energy on court but their first-rate hospitality off it, with many men and women club members not even in action on the night turning up to welcome visitors. The team even serenaded teams when on away trips with their beautiful waiata. Kā pai.

It's great to see the continued growth of Interclub participation, where we are seeing a lot more teams entering compared to the last two years, especially in the case of Women's Interclub and Masters Interclub.

Thank you, Nicola Ward-Thomas, Interclub Convenor for your time and commitment on administering interclub over another challenging season. Your openness and timely manner in responding to responses is much appreciated.

Events & Initiatives

The numbers - Interclub

Year	2021	2020	2019
Men's	49 (+4%)	47 (+3%)	36
Women's	27 (+35%)	20 (+25%)	16
Masters	6 (+50%)	4 (+33%)	3
TOTAL	82 (+15%)	71 (+29%)	55



SuperChamps

We were fortunate enough to continue the district eliminations before the second lockdown of 2021. Thanks to the host clubs who made this event a vibrant and memorable season highlight for so many players.



Congratulations to the following Grade Champions.



Grade	Women's winners	Men's winners	Host
E	Red Star	Island Bay	Red Star
D	Hutt City	Masterton	Island Bay
C	Tawa	Kāpiti	Hutt City
B	Hutt City	Thorndon	Thorndon

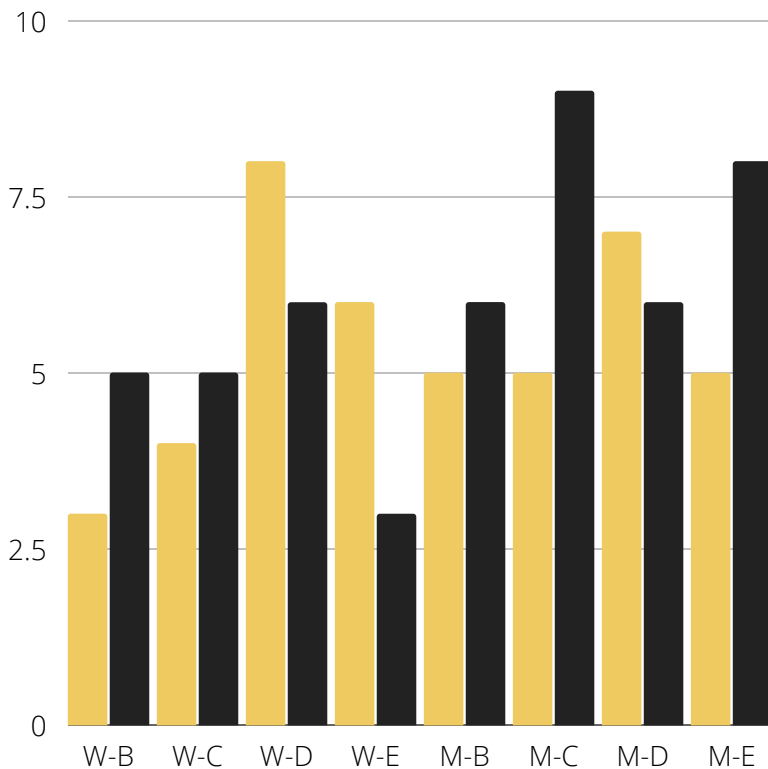
The national event, another casualty to COVID, did not go ahead in 2021, for the first time in recent memory.

While we acknowledge the disappointment of the players who had trained hard and completed much of the logistical and fundraising prep, we are grateful to have been able to at least crown our District Champions for 2021.

Events & Initiatives

...SuperChamps continued

When comparing the number of team entries over the past two years, there has been a slight decrease, but it is heartening to see healthy growth in the Women's D & E grades.



Grade	2021	2020
Women's B	3	5
Women's C	4	5
Women's D	8	6
Women's E	6	3
Men's B	5	6
Men's C	5	9
Men's D	7	6
Men's E	5	8

Cousins Shield and Mitchell Cup

On the first weekend of June 2021, the Hutt City Squash men's team competed in the Cousins Shield and the Mana women's team competed in the Mitchell Cup. Held at the Devoy Squash and Fitness Club in Tauranga, this is the prestigious premier (A-grade) national men's and women's interclub event.

Always hotly contested titles, this year's competition was no different to previous years and in the case of the Cousin's shield, with Hutt City featuring in what many described as a semi-final fit for the final. Hutt City squared off against Devoy with the winner decided by the smallest of margins after 4 hours of epic edge-of-the-seat action.

In the end it was Devoy who progressed through to the final, but Squash Wellington was proud that Hutt City featured in what was touted as the most exhilarating match-up in the last 20 years.



THE SEASON AHEAD

The exciting thing about the Sport sector is that options are plentiful. The entire sector has been forced to think differently, find ways to attract people through a broad range of channels and adapt events to cater to the continuously changing needs of our community.

So, this year we'll need continue to be ready to pivot our approach while also delivering the traditional events that our members expect from us. This season our key focus must continue to be growth! Growth in people playing squash, new and existing. Growth in skills development across our support roles, and Growth in our club capability to future proof our sport.

To that end our key Strategic Priorities will be:



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.

The execution will be through our Annual plan, with the continued support of convenors, coaches, and members across our district.



KEEP CALM AND PLAY SQUASH



Squash Wellington



squashwellington.org.nz