

# In the **SW**ing

Squash Wellington Newsletter

## WE TOURNAMENT CONTROLLERS

It's been a big month with tournaments, squads, series and a flurry of interclub games played to finish off the regular season and there's plenty in the following pages updating you on all those goings on.

But as this page is a platform for the editor – or guest editor in my case – to say something meaningful, I'll reflect on the work done by all our tournament directors and controllers. They've had a really rough ride in the last couple of years and if anything, things are getting worse, not better. I've seen first hand the massive hours put in by these folk changing draws, chasing new players and communicating new times and feel immensely grateful for their unpaid services. A heartfelt thank you from the SW Board.

My plea to all competitive players is to do your bit to respect our TCs' time and sanity. It's pretty simple:

- make a note of which competitions you've entered or you've entered your child into (don't make them chase you to turn up);
- pull out as soon as you know you're unavailable (don't wait til the draw has come out);
- do your best to find a replacement if you have to pull out; and
- don't be grumpy if faced with a bye as an opponent has pulled out and don't expect an entry fee rebate; TCs aren't magicians.

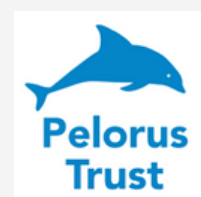
Meanwhile, read on to hear about our fabulous new District Masters champions, play hard in your interclub finals and have a blast at the best comp in NZ squash: Superchamps!

***Catharine Sayer, SW Board member and guest editor***

[www.squashwellington.org.nz](http://www.squashwellington.org.nz)



## Sponsors & Supporters



# PARTICIPATION

## SKILLSOFT MASTER OF MASTERS SERIES

The race is on for the coveted Green Jackets and trophies for the 2022 Masters of Masters Series! It has been fantastic to see new faces join this year, as well as regulars from last year.

Following the Wellington Masters, the gap between the top 3 places in both men's and women's comps is minimal with the Kapiti Masters being the potential decider!

### Leaderboard

#### Men's

- 1** Gary Aukett / Matt Leahy - 43 points
- 2** Conrad Wildig - 39 points
- 3** James Poskitt - 37 points

#### Women's

- 1** Jeanne Yells - 61 points (the maximum available)
- 2** Alissha Canning - 53 points
- 3** Michelle Burns - 51 points

All the very best to all players for the final round at the Kapiti Masters on August 19th-21st. Thanks again to Skillsoft for their amazing support for the series in 2022.

## Round Four - Wellington Masters, Island Bay, 15-17 July

This year we crowned new - but returning - Champions at Island Bay last weekned.

Congratulations to Jeanne Yells on her 2nd district Masters title and Sam Atkins on his 5th district Masters title! This was his fifth championship out of the 6 years since moving into the Masters age group, impressive!

The tournament was played in that great fun but competitive spirit that is synonymous with Masters squash. As with most tournaments these days, the competition was affected by the dreaded Covid pullouts and injuries so thank you very much to all players for their patience leading up and during the tournament.

Despite that, it is great to see people come out and support the tournament and the host club, just as they have been with other tournaments around the district.

Island Bay also held a Denim on Denim dress function with Karaoke on the Saturday night. I have never seen so much denim since my teenager days, and it was gold!

Congratulations to Tanya Fulcher who took out the award for best dressed with her quad denim ensemble. As for the Karaoke, I left before the big singers took stage, but was comforted to hear Catharine and Lachlan Sayers' joyful rendition of Jolene as I slipped out the door :) (*Think you'll find we were the main event, Bry, although Matt Green revealed his Elton John alter ego after a few shandies - Ed.*)

Squash Wellington would also like to thank Island Bay for being excellent hosts in 2022.

With that, be safe out there everyone. Look after yourselves and your whanau. See you at Kāpiti.

regards,

**Bryan Smith**  
**Masters Convenor**

**skillsoft**



# PARTICIPATION

SQUASH  
WELLINGTON

## WELLINGTON MASTERS

The over 35-year-olds of the district caught themselves a well-earned break from pastings by young-uns in the district masters comp held at Island Bay 15-17 July.





# PARTICIPATION

## WELLINGTON MASTERS





## PARTICIPATION

### HEAD9hundy @ Hutt City 16 July 2022

Round 5 of the J series was hosted by Hutt City whose committee is a well-oiled machine after having held the Hutt City Dubs, the Wellington Dubs, Hutt City Women's Tourny, Hutt City B&Below, Hutt City Open and the Wellington Open so far this season. Neil Haxton was the lucky TC who rose to the challenge of keeping 30+ juniors fed and rotating round the courts.

11 clubs were represented and it was great to see so many juniors committing to the whole series.

Check out a few of the action shots here - credit Ann Smith.

The last and final round where our champions will be crowned will be at Mana on 28 August. It's all about having fun and participating so let's have a great finale.

#pushplay

#balanceisbetter





## FEATURE ARTICLE

### ESSAY - THE SPIRIT OF SPORT

A squash photo won the racquets category of a global sports photography competition last year for the first time. Featuring not only Paul Coll in Superman mode, fully stretched parallel to the floor to reach a drive onto his forehand on a glass court at a Platinum event, his nemesis Mostafa Asal was captured gesturing in wild disbelief.

The quality in that Nathan Clarke image was unmistakable, being a perfect marriage of athleticism, emotion, aesthetically-pleasing staging and lighting, timing and technique. Here, though, I'm putting forward a contender for this year's title that is unashamedly devoid of technical quality.

Actually, there've been a couple of world-famous-in-New Zealand snaps that fit that bill. For the benefit of our non-squash readership, and some spot-the-difference fun, here goes:



**Island Bay en route to Surf City, Gisborne, April 2021. The assembled talent fell foul of Susie's catering as they came away with the silver medal.**

**Hull to Glasgow roadie, April 2022 for a lean and well-drilled NZ Doubles Team; all smiles before being fined for not wearing the official team strip**



A picture can tell a thousand words, right, but it's not in the SWing's style to skimp on words, so here we go.

The NZ dubs team selfie (OK, OK, the crew in black) was a comms masterstroke, a succinct but perfectly formed riposte to the following sentiments doing the rounds just two days after the (then\*) men's singles World no. 1 from Greymouth, Paul Coll, had lifted the equivalent of a grand slam title:



Now Jamie is, let's say, an *agent provocateur* to put it politely, so it's never a good idea to give his views too much airtime. However, the notion of a Wimbledon champion being sent – never mind bussed with the team – to play Davis Cup two days after lifting the

*\*article written in April*



## FEATURE ARTICLE

coveted trophy would have been too much even when tennis superstardom merely meant jumping the queue at a West End nightclub.

Sticking with tennis, on the same day as that rebuke, an article about the mental health difficulties of pro tennis players was doing the rounds in cyberspace; it bemoaned that talented youngsters – equipped only with prodigious ball-hitting skills – were by day having to be the CEOs of small businesses whose employees were generally older and wiser experts, yet by night were bored and lonely, lacking contemporaries to kick back with. Seemingly oblivious to irony, the writer wound up by prescribing the addition of a mental health expert to the payroll.

Clearly NZ doesn't roll in the way that Jamie Maddox feels is befitting of its stars, nor the way the tennis scene operates.

### ***Shabby chic***

Let's take a look. We see that–

- The van is decidedly no-frills
- Joelle has brought a packed lunch
- Paul's in slippers
- Lwamba's not above flicking bunny ears
- The lefties (Abbie, Evan and Amanda) are keeping tight
- The coach is out of shot – presumably behind the wheel
- They're catching up on gossip and will probably create a bit during the trip

### ***Performance bonus***

The staffer running the comms desk at Squash New Zealand scored a coup in posting the NZ doubles team roadie photo on social media.

(C) Nathan Clarke





## FEATURE ARTICLE

Top marks were scored for *target market relatability through authenticity*, to use fancy marketing speak. We can't help wondering who was late, who forgot their shoes, who's hungover, who'll need the most toilet stops, who's got the worst taste in music, who'll be chatting up the opposition, who'll plan the team skit at the Saturday night party and who'll keep the fines book.

More seriously, the transport arrangements also give subtle signals about the trip investment and management:

- Everyone will stay at the same hotel in the same standard of room
- Heck, they'll even be sharing rooms (I'll go with Joey & Amanda, Kaitlyn & Abbie, Evan & PC, Lui & Temwa)
- The experienced campaigners will mentor the debutants on the rhythm and dynamic of international team competition
- They'll attend meals, team meetings and trainings when the manager specifies, sponsors' commitments taking a back seat.

OK, you geddit, they're a team!

### Culture

While Jamie and his acolytes may have felt bemused or, being generous, concerned for the welfare of the British Open champ\*, the bonding and thrill in being a team for the first time since the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games will have vastly outweighed the lack of rest and luxury.

Indeed, Wellington's own Evan Williams had this to say:

*Our team culture is the best in the world. You can always hear us before you see us – never in singles. Always laughing and supporting – it's fantastic!"*

*\*No such concern for Joelle, the world no. 5 and British Open semi-finalist, was expressed*

### Evan Williams, team man since forever



(fourth from left) Representing NZ in 1998 at the World Juniors in Zurich v Canada

Representing Wellington (front and centre, as usual) at the NZ Inter-District Teams' Comp, c. 2008. He's still known to raid his father's wardrobe for a night out.



### The spirit of sport

In reality, the Squash NZ post may not have been to silence the trolls nor show the world of professional sport that squash players are reasonably well adjusted. It probably wasn't a clumsy ploy to signal the administrators' careful use of high performance funding nor to inspire us clubbies to higher levels of attainment.



## FEATURE ARTICLE

It may simply have been to spark enthusiasm from the Kiwi squash fraternity for the comp ahead, in which the team had a solid chance of a couple of gold medals. But what the snap actually signified goes deeper than that, and why I doubt there'll be a better squash image this year.

One moment distilled in a half-cocked selfie illustrates that sport at its heart is about joy and bonding whatever the performance level. It gives amateurs a sense of connection to their heroes, the feeling that elite performance is attainable and worthy of aspiration because, crucially, it looks like a safe and happy place to be.

So back to the tennis. Now, this isn't intended to reduce serious mental health issues to mere flippancy, nor to deny the precarious and stressful existence of many tennis pros outside the top 200 and almost all pro squash players. But squash may have got things more or less right by nourishing its superstars with adequacy rather than luxury and the company of relatable peers rather than bloated entourages of experts.

So, if you're needing a pass for a squash weekend away, insist it's essential for your mental wellbeing, even if those late night rounds of shots with your hosts take the edge off your shots on-court.

**Catharine Sayer**

## EVAN WILLIAMS RETIREMENT

After 14 years on the PSA tour, district squash icon Evan Williams has announced his professional retirement.

Evan, 32, born in Rotorua and raised in Tawa, has represented himself, the Tawa, Thorndon and Hutt City clubs, Squash Wellington and New Zealand with aplomb and dedication from his junior days until handing in his tour card earlier this month.

Squash Wellington warmly congratulates Evan on his playing career and wishes him well in his ongoing coaching initiatives.

Befitting of his long and successful career, In the SWing will be featuring a career retrospective of Evan in a future edition.





## MATCH REPORT

### NUKU ORA AWARDS, 5 July 2022, TSB Bank Arena, Wellington

Squash not having received any regional sporting accolades in living memory (any advance on Club of the Year 1951, still cited proudly by Tawa on its tournament posters?), the shout went out early to make the Nuku Ora awards the third most glamorous social event on the calendar, after, obviously, the Mana Christmas Party and the Squash Wellington Awards.

Easily being the coolest sport in a crowded marketplace, the occasion was naturally viewed by squashies as more than an opportunity to bask in glory, kick back and afford the also-rans a glimpse of the lives of the beautiful people. Rather, it was approached by the contestants, ahem, guests as they would any other fixture in the Squash Wellington calendar: a competition with points at stake. Bragging points, that is.

Receiving two individual nominations, Squash Wellington was handed a wild card straight into the Open division. While some of the squad would have settled with the Consolation Plate for out-glamming tennis, those with a modicum of ambition knew squash's street cred and style would see it contend strongly against the top seeds in town, namely the professionals of the Phoenix, Hurricanes and Pulse.

#### *Squash: the beautiful game*



**Hannah Grimmert, Ōtaki, Club of the Year**

And so, like all good weddings, the participants managed to rustle up something old (Russell's wedding suit), new (Maiden-Lee's slinky gown), borrowed (a statuesque gold lame frock from Sydney, Jeanne) and blue (a nameless attendee's assets in the wintry air), throwing in a makeover from Whitby village for good measure (that'll be Bryan).

A marker was set early by squash taking out the first gong of the night, Club of the Year (Ōtaki, with thanks to tennis for the assist) taking us into the semi-final. Thereafter, our two individual nominations and the most raucous and ~~partisan~~ enthusiastic whānau support scored us de facto upset wins over higher fancied opposition. We'd come prepared for every eventuality, but the dancefloor, boatrace and karaoke tie-breaker rounds weren't required, the other contestants slinking away quietly into the night.

*Veni, vidi, vici*, which, as every young squashie should know, loosely translates as *I came, I saw, I boasted*.

**Catharine Sayer**



# MATCH REPORT



All award photos courtesy of Digital Ninja  
- Photography & Design

*Ladies and gentlemen, it's simple really...*

THE DOMINION POST  
SPORT AND RECREATION  
AWARDS



*...play squash and you too can look like us!*



# COMPETITIONS

## Coming up..

Interclub finals	26/27 July
District Superchamps	29-31 July
B-grade@Tawa / C-grade@Khandallah	
D-grade@Wainuiomata / E-grade@Upper Hutt	
Khandallah Masters	05-07 Aug
Red Star August Open	12-14 Aug
Women's HEAD 800@Khandallah (final)	14 Aug
Hemi Rangi Memorial Dubs@Wainuiomata	19-21 Aug
Wellington Junior Open@Kapiti	19-21 Aug
Kapiti Masters	19-21 Aug
Thorndon B&Below	26-28 Aug
Junior HEAD 9Hundy@Mana (final)	28 Aug

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**STOP PRESS: Maiden-Lee Coe is this year's North Island U17 Champion! He mahi tino pai!**



# Wellington Junior Open

**19-21 Aug**  
**@Kāpiti**

**In conjunction with Kāpiti  
Masters**

**\*\*Cash prizes\*\***

**Spot prizes throughout the  
weekend**

**\$30  
entry**

**enter via iSquash**

