

In the **SW**ing

Squash Wellington Newsletter

AWARD SEASON

Awards produce the highs and lows of winning and losing, just like we experience when playing our favourite sport. But it's not just about who won it on the night – the nominations themselves are a reminder of all the amazing achievements made by players, clubs, teams and volunteers across the Wellington District over the past 12 months.

The Squash NZ awards are coming up in early December, and we will see our district's winners of Club, Coach, and Volunteer of the Year progress for national contention. Best of luck to you all!

This month sees competition reports from both ends of the age spectrum; the NZ Junior Age Group & Inter-District Teams Event at the lower end, and the Trans-Tasman Masters Test Series at the other. And speaking of well-seasoned squashies, ItS reporter Catharine Sayer sets her sights on Grant Scobie for an exclusive interview with one of our district's elder statesmen of squash.

We also have reports from our coaching day, and news of an upcoming junior challenge. If you want to score some awesome gear, then act quick and put in your best suggestion for Squash NZ's naming contest.

Aside from that, have a great month, and hope you enjoy playing doubles and watching some of the world's best squash players competing in Tauranga.



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SQUASH WELLINGTON AWARDS



Massive congratulations to all the nominees and winners at the Squash Wellington Annual Awards, hosted by Mana on Friday 14 October.

Thank you also to the capacity crowd for attending and creating a fantastic sense of buzz and excitement on the night.

Full List of Winners:

Masters Player of the Year	Jeanne Yells
Junior Player of the Year	Matt Green
Player of the Year	Maiden-Lee Coe
Most Improved Junior	Oliver Dunbar
Most Improved Player	Maiden-Lee Coe
Master of Masters Series	Evan Williams
HEAD 9Hundy Series Winner	Greer Gibbs
HEAD 800 Series Winner	Liam Poskett
Most Competitive Player	Ngahuia Puketapu
Most Competitive Club	Tyler McBride
Team of the Year	Jeanne Yells
	Gary Aukett
	Connor Keall
	Natasha Dowse
	Damien Hickling
	Mana
	Thorndon B Grade Men

Interclub

Slazenger Trophy	Island Bay	Thorndon
Women's 1	Thorndon 1	Mana
Women's 2	Mana Women's 1	Upper Hutt
Women's 3	Kererū	Khandallah
Women's 4	KTSC Women's 2	Kāpiti
Men's 1	Kāpiti Men's 1	Upper Hutt
Men's 2	Upper Hutt Men's 1	Ōtaki
Men's 3	Ōtaki Men's 1	Tawa
Men's 4	Dflats	Island Bay
Men's 5	The Wee Heavies	Island Bay
Men's 6	Trailblazers	Island Bay
Men's 7	Hāpi Dazers	Island Bay

Outstanding Achievement
Jade Wilson Memorial
Darren Slape Memorial
Significant Contribution
Special Recognition
Best use of Social Media
Initiative of the Year
Coach of the Year
Volunteer of the Year
Club of the Year

Brett Simon - National Referee
Nicola Ward-Thomas
Stu Demler
Evan Williams
Tawa - Court Four
Island Bay Facebook
Wainuiomata - Social In House Comp
Jack Shearer
Bryan Smith
Thorndon Tennis & Squash Club

PARTICIPATION - FEATURE ARTICLE

GRANT SCOBIE

Cub In the SWing reporter **Catharine Sayer** (*surely journeyman by now? Ed.*) drops in on Khandallah to witness end-to-end pathways in action.

I've received a hot tip that there's an emerging talent under Matt Green's tutelage at Khandallah, so I hasten there to grab the inside scoop. I find the player warming down after an early Sunday morning session – no rest for squash tragics – and, like an old pro, he's happy to strike poses through the glass before we settle down to talk.

Growth mindset

Grant, or more properly, Emeritus Professor Scobie, is serious about improving his squash and for the last couple of years has invested in weekly coaching to top off his 3 social hits. The goal? "I want a good showing at my 90th birthday tournament." Of course. He's clearly playing the long game, the 80th birthday tournament having taken place only last year. "I'll jolly well have to invite the folk who beat me at that one" he rails, revealing a true sportsman's hint of incredulity.

Heading

What his tournament adversaries lacked in etiquette they made up for in verve, a quality Dr Scobie rates highly after having been a competitive player on four continents ever since taking up the sport aged 17 as an economics student at the then Massey Agricultural College in Palmerston North. The wholesomeness of those times seems other-wordly, when he relates having played regularly between ten and eleven at night at the town's only club then refuelling from the pie cart in the Square. What, no post-session cold ones? Dr Scobie appears genuinely taken aback at the question ("absolutely not") and I can't help think of sepia photos of suited



and earnest young men – always young men – in training to be post-colonial captains of industry and commerce.

Globetrotter

After stints working as an economist in Canberra and North America, Dr Scobie's proudest coup was in ensuring inclusion of a squash court on the campus at a new scientific research institute in Cali, Colombia. Impressed with the initiative of the newly recruited ex-pat squash playing faculty in commissioning architectural plans and fundraising to the tune of US\$10,000, the director saw sense and insisted on its construction at the institute's cost.

Dr Scobie gained fitness at least, with regular midday hits at 42oC in the shade, not bad preparation for playing at 10,000ft altitude during a stint in Quito, Ecuador. Contesting B-grade nationals in Ecuador remains a fond memory ("well

PARTICIPATION - FEATURE ARTICLE

not just a memory – I’ve still got the T-shirt”) and possibly the pinnacle of his fitness: “It wasn’t just playing at altitude that got me fit; I didn’t trust the office lift so was regularly walking up to the 13th floor”.

Scobie reflects on the capacity of the global squash community to forge new and rekindle old connections. When playing in the tri-state champs in Washington DC in 1981, at 6’3” tall he was bemused to find himself pitted against a 5’ woman in the B-grade draw, who, with the crowd easily in her favour, seemed to be running between his legs. His embarrassment at being given the run-around by “this slip of a girl” evaporated post-match when he realised that his adversary, Alison Orgias, was the daughter of former Black Cap, South African cricket coach and Club Kelburn founder John Reid. Her sporting genes said it all.

Back down to earth

His cosmopolitan ways garnered from years in economics and policy institutes overseas didn’t meet with universal approval. On Scobie’s return to New Zealand, as economics professor at Waikato University, interclub opponents showed less than fulsome appreciation for his culinary contributions. “We [Ruakura] were hosting Te Kuiti and after the



matches it was up to us to lay on supper of course. I’ll never forget one visitor’s forthright declaration about my plate. “Bloody funny sausage roll!” he vented – and unusually there were plenty left at the end. When I got home I gently suggested to my wife to take spanakopita off the menu. We went seriously downmarket after that.”

Ruthless

While the 90th birthday tournament is officially the pinnacle event, we talk about milestones along the way, the most tangible being to regularly win against Bernard, his weekly hit of twenty years. In fact, I suspect getting one over on Bernard would bring the greatest satisfaction: Matt Green has confided that his failsafe ploy to get Scobie on song is to casually enquire as to how Bernard would dispatch a particularly soft shot.

Scobie’s a true believer in coaching, conceding that in his 61st year of playing squash, he wished he’d taken it up years ago. Despite his evangelism for professional assistance, I doubt he’ll be encouraging arthritic 75-year-old Bernard to sign up. Good sportsmanship has its limits, you know.



PARTICIPATION



CALLING ALL JUNIORS!

Wellington vs Central Challenge



Wellington Juniors will be taking on Central Juniors in a fun, but competitive one-day challenge on **Sunday 26 February, 2023**.

It's a perfect opportunity for a roadie up to **Palmerston North** just as the season is getting warmed up after the summer break.

If you are a junior player, or a parent of a junior player, and are interested in representing your district, get in touch with Russell - admin@squashwellington.org.nz

It's a perfect opportunity for juniors who are interested in taking their game to the next level to participate in a competitive environment and learn from our more experienced junior representative players. For inspiration, read on to hear about the NZ Junior Age Group & Inter-District Teams events.

COMPETITIONS

The Masters Trans-Tasman test series



Our 2022 Wellington Masters (Male) Player of the Year and Coach of the Year finalist Matt Green recently represented NZ in the Masters Trans-Tasman series.

This year was the 25th contest between our two countries for the Vic Belsham Trophy.

From SNZ news

The Masters Trans-Tasman test series wrapped up on 15th October with Australia claiming the third test 10 matches to 4, taking an overall 3-0 series win.

Paul Tuffin, Rachel McLeod, Gary Duberly, and Mark Waldin led the NZ team with victories, but the Aussies proved too strong once again.

Awesome effort from all the Kiwis after 8 gruelling days of competition. Now time for some well-earned rest!

A great effort by everyone and congratulations again to Matt, being named in the team is an awesome achievement in itself. Bring on round 2 aye?!

COMPETITIONS

G.J GARDNER HOMES NZ Junior Age Group & Inter-District Teams Event

Earlier this month the GJ Gardner NZ Junior Age Group Championships & Inter-district Teams event came to Wellington, hosted by Hutt City Squash. It was great to see Wellington represented with 27 juniors making up the 150 entries.



It was particularly great to see many of our juniors take advantage of this event being in their hometown. For many it was their first NZ Age Group Championships.

Congratulations to Oliver Dunbar for his absolute stellar performance in the U17 championship final. Up against the #1 seed, it was evident very early in the game that Oli was there to claim the title. It was a great match with both players pushing each other hard. In the end, Oli took the match 3/0 to claim his first national age group title.

In addition, Oli's endeavours throughout the season saw him pick up the Squash NZ Most Improved Junior Award.

Congratulations to all the Wellington players who played in the individual event.

Alex Fingleton (KH), Alex Walsh (MA), Ben Jones (RS), Bobby Stannard (IB), Charlotte Haxton (HC), Diana Galloway (HC), Eamon Gannon (MA) – Runner Up Boys U13, Greer Gibbs (KA), Jake Sweeny (MT), James Rukuwai (TH), Krishiv Tarway (KH), Kyra Wyeth (RS), Lexi MacPherson (RS), Liam Poskitt (WO), Liberty Jones (RS) – 3rd Girls U13, Mackenzie Tait (MS) – 3rd place Girls U17, Maiden-Lee Coe (MA) – Runner Up Girls U17, Makaia Sutton (MS), Molly Hawkins (HC), Nate Kennerley (HC), Otis Brown (IB), Paddy Nicholson (MS), Shay Gannon (MA), Sophia De Nardi-Gonzalez (HC), Sophie Sweeney (MT), Theo Gannon (MA).

NZ JUNIOR INTER-DISTRICT TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

Following the individuals was the teams event. After injuries resulted Shay Gannon and Ben Jones pulling out, Bobby Stannard (IB) was drafted in to fill the #4 spot and technically moved our boys below their original 7th seed spot. However, they fought a hard campaign to finish 6th overall, with two of their five ties lost only on countback.

The girls' team started very strong, coming 2nd in their pool play and securing some solid wins to end above seeding as well.

Some great performances were seen across both teams with many players ticking off 9 matches in 6 days, so everyone was pretty much feeling it by Wednesday.



Thank you to all the parents and supporters who got behind the team all weekend.

An extra special thanks to our management team of Gemma Gee and Evan Williams. A lot goes into preparing and managing the team, especially during the event so thank you!

COMPETITIONS



Congratulations to all 2022 NZ Age Group champions
Oli Dunbar 3rd from right



Oli named Wellington team flag bearer



Team manager Gemma Gee provides an update,
Boys U17 Championship - Oli leads 2/0



Filling up the tank - lunchtime



Inter-District Team photo

CLUB CAPABILITY

Skill Learning Coaching Clinic

A big thank you to Jason Fletcher, Squash NZ Coach Development Leader, who travelled down to Wellington to run a coaching workshop at Hutt City on 16 October.

We had 10 coaches sign up for the day, plus a few *guinea pig* players to allow the coaches to put the theory into practice.

A fantastic morning of learning and sharing, a great mix of theory and practical exercises that our coaches were able to implement with their coachees. The course was based on the Skill Learning coaching module on Squash Smart. (*Look over there →*)

Big thanks to our club coaches for getting amongst it and sharpening their tools to support players back at their respective clubs.



Squash Smart

If you still haven't signed up for Squash Smart, now's the perfect time to develop a range of squash-related skills during the off-season.

The Skill Learning module is an example of a useful, practical coaching tool that can be applied in a practical setting. And remember, it's not just about coaching, there are great courses in a range of areas.

It's also absolutely free to sign up and use - head over to www.squashsmart.co.nz to find out more.



NATIONAL NEWS

NEW IT PLATFORM NAMING COMPETITION



In 2024 iSquash will be replaced by a new member management, club management and access, and competition management platform. The new platform will be more user friendly, mobile friendly and has extra functionality.

We need a name! What do you think? Win a Dunlop squash prize pack (high end Dunlop racquet, eye wear and a dozen balls) to the person who suggests the winning name. Please send your suggestion to Russell admin@squashwellington.org.nz by 6 November

Our new system will save our volunteer's time. It will bring all our data together to understand our sport better. It will improve our member's experience. Our ultimate goal is to grow our game and make our clubs vibrant and successful.

COMING UP

Nations Cup (Tauranga)	3 November
Thorndon Doubles	4 November
NZ Squash Open (Tauranga)	8 November
Upper Hutt Doubles	12 November
Island Bay Doubles	18 November
Tawa Doubles	25 November
Wainuiomata Doubles	02 December
Tawa Ham & Turkey	07 December

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Contact admin@squashwellington.org.nz for more details.