



**SQUASH WELLINGTON**

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**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2022**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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





# CHAIR REPORT

Tena koutou

2022 saw the shift back to the courts, and clubs settled into a new normal. I commend our clubs for their ability to continue to adapt to meet the changing needs of members and prospective members within the local communities.

From a Board perspective we continue to strengthen our foundations through relevant and targeted strategic focus to set up our sport for the future.

It has been an extremely busy year for clubs and the district with participation across various events increasing, and for some clubs an increase in membership, well done! In addition, most clubs have completed some facilities upgrades over the year. Much of this has been possible through the generosity of club volunteers who have spent many hours over weekends and evenings upgrading their clubs.

Looking forward, this year we will see the return of the NZ Junior Individual and Teams event in October to Wellington. Last year we had over 150 participate in the individual event and at least one team from each district represented in the team's event. A great opportunity for Wellington to showcase squash, particularly of talented juniors, within our region and nationally.

The Board continues to be grateful to the 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, after almost 5 years on the Squash Wellington Board, I am stepping down from the Board this year. It has been a pleasure working with the Board and clubs more closely over the past few years. I leave feeling proud of all the amazing things we have achieved and excited at what is still yet to come.

Nga mihi nui

**Ann Smith**

**Chair, Squash Wellington Board**



Ann Smith  
**Squash Wellington  
Chairwoman**



# BOARD MEMBERS



**Ann Smith**  
Hutt City



**Malcolm Thomas**  
Tawa



**Storm McKenna**  
Red Star



**Catharine Sayer**  
Island Bay



## BOARD MEMBERS (CONT)



**Christine Rukuwai**  
Thorndon (ret.)



# GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

I am writing this as my first Operational Report for Squash Wellington as General Manager, having started the role in May 2022. For around eight months prior to this, I was employed part time as the District Administrator, therefore 2022 was my first full squash season at Squash Wellington. This meant a lot of 'firsts' for me as GM, such as my first Wellington Open, and first SuperChamps. I'm hugely appreciative of the guidance I have received from Squash Wellington Board Members, Convenors, Club Captains, Presidents, Junior Convenors, Squash New Zealand staff, and other key individuals in the squash scene; their (your!) combined encyclopaedic knowledge is something I can only aspire to! Thank you.



**Russell Henderson,  
General Manager**

There is something refreshing about writing this report in the early stages of 2023, where clubs and districts are setting about planning their squash seasons without the limitations and risks we had to manoeuvre in the previous three years. But this wasn't the case in the first part of 2022, where we faced major challenges, such as navigating the Covid Protection Framework in order to ensure compliance. With all the changeable information flowing in from various sources; MBIE, Sport NZ, and Squash NZ, it made for a tricky start to the season, and I would like to thank clubs for their hard work in keeping in regular communication and finding ways to make events happen, even if it meant unavoidable compromises.

What follows here is a highlight reel of key events and achievements of district-level squash in 2022, and a few pointers to what we anticipate in 2023.



# PARTICIPATION

## HEAD Series

We saw a wide range of participation at all levels in 2022. The **HEAD Women's 800 Series** continues to be a popular introduction to competitive squash for women players, and the 2022 series saw 50 participants taking part over 6 rounds, with **Natasha Dowse (Mana)** taking first place. On the junior side, the **HEAD Junior 9Hundy** also had 6 rounds, with 88 participants, many of whom were well on their way into the 'grown-up' grades by the end of the season. **Connor Keall (Wainuiomata)** came out on top after six rounds of the competition. Both these series look to grow further in 2023, with more clubs than even offering to host, and an additional round of the 9Hundy being scheduled. We've also upped the points limit for the Women's series to 899 (top of E grade) to include those who have graded out of the series, but aren't fully ready to compete in regular tournaments.

The HEAD logo is displayed in a large, bold, white sans-serif font against a black rectangular background. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the top right of the letter 'D'. Below the black rectangle is a thin horizontal orange line.

## Master of Masters

On the other end of the 'experience spectrum', the Master of Masters series returned, this time seeing the top 5 women players and top 5 men players all receiving cash prizes, courtesy of series sponsor **Skillsoft** (although only 1 woman and 1 man get to wear the coveted jackets!). The series promotes participation by awarding points for the number of tournaments entered, as well as wins. In 2023, the series grows further, with 7 Masters tournaments in the calendar, and an increased budget, thanks to joint series sponsors Skillsoft and Yellowhammer.



# PARTICIPATION

## District Tournaments

The 2022 **Wellington Open** was a major event, with around 170 entries from all over the country making it one of the largest individuals events in the Wellington district for many years. The Women's Open was won by **Lana Harrison**, after a thrilling final against **Charlotte Galloway**. In one of his final matches as a PSA player, **Evan Williams** picked up the Men's Open trophy, after seeing off Australian **Ben Ratcliffe** in the final. With all 6 Hutt City courts in pretty much constant use throughout the weekend, the scene is set for an amazing event when it returns to **Hutt City** this year.



**Kāpiti** once more provided a warm welcome when hosting the **Wellington Junior Open**, which again tied in with their own Masters event. With a couple of the would-be-top-seeds out of contention, it provided an opportunity for some up-and-comers, with **Molly Hawkins** (Hutt City) and **Ben Jones** (Red Star) coming out as girls and boys champions respectively. The event moves this year to Tawa, who will showcase their new exhibition court.



The 2022 **Wellington Masters** was a fun event, hosted by **Island Bay** and capped off in true Bay style with a double denim karaoke party. **Sam Atkins** saw off reigning champion **Matt Green** to lift the men's trophy, whilst **Jeanne Yells** continued her amazing run of Masters events by winning the women's. Numbers were a little lower than in previous years, which some attributed to the event taking place in school holidays. In response to this, the date has shifted later in the season when it is hosted by Mana, forming the final round of the Master of Masters series.





# PARTICIPATION

Grade	Women's Champs	Men's Champs	Hosts
B	Tawa	Thorndon	Tawa
C	Thorndon	Upper Hutt	Khandallah
D	Kāpiti	Thorndon	Wainuiomata
E	Martinborough	Mana	Upper Hutt

## SuperChamps

2022 was a fantastic year for SuperChamps, after the previous year's nationals being cancelled due to COVID. The hosts and Tournament Controllers for District SuperChamps, Chris Sinclair at Tawa, Radar Galliers at Wainuiomata, Heather McClean at Khandallah, and Brett Simon at Upper Hutt, did an incredible job, especially given that so many players were forced to pull out due to illness. Tawa followed up by hosting an amazing B Grade National SuperChamps which saw both trophies being won by Wellington Teams; Thorndon in the men's and Tawa in the women's. In 2023, District SuperChamps will be hosted by Thorndon (B Grade), Red Star & Masterton (C Grade), Tawa (D Grade), and Island Bay (E Grade).

SuperChamps Teams Per Grade	2022	2021	2020
Women's B	3	3	5
Women's C	5	4	5
Women's D	8	8	6
Women's E	5	6	3
Men's B	5	5	6
Men's C	10	5	9
Men's D	6	7	6
Men's E	5	5	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>48</b>

# CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

## Coaching

2022 saw some awesome opportunities for coaches through Squash NZ, which will continue to grow in 2023. We currently have 20 coaches on our register, including 4 women coaches, but look to grow this number, particular with regards to women coaches.

The **Squash NZ Coaching Forum**, held in Palmerston North on 29 May, was run for the lower North Island, and the attendants included several Wellington coaches. This was an opportunity for coaches to connect, share ideas, and learn through the guidance of Squash NZ Coach Development Leader, Jason Fletcher.

Fletch also ran a **'Skill Learning' Coaching Day** on 16 October at Hutt City Squash Club. With 10 coaches in attendance on the day, plus 4 'guinea pig' players to be coached, it was the best attended coaching day Fletch has run so far, and a positive experience for all involved. This particular coaching day was the practical arm of the Skill Learning module on **Squash Smart**, which most of the coaches in attendance had completed prior to attending. Squash Smart has modules being added all the time, and it would be great to see more clubs engaging with the platform in 2023.





# CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

## Development Squads

The Wellington Development Programme entered its second year, once again with the expert coaching of **Evan Williams** (Juniors & Seniors) and **Matt Green** (Masters). This programme really helps to lift our player capability, whilst tying in to the national **End-to-End Player Pathway**.

Numbers were healthy, with 21 Juniors, 16 Seniors, and 26 Masters attending the training camps, hosted by Hutt City. Rather than focusing purely on the game itself, the camps take a holistic approach, with a range of activities, and look to build a sense of camaraderie and team spirit, which are invaluable when approaching what is typically an individual sport in a team environment.

The Development Programme is funded through a combination of grant funding, player contributions, and sponsorship, with sponsors **AZ Flooring** helping enormously to the success of the programme at a time when grant funding can be highly unpredictable.



# PERFORMANCE

## Representative Teams

Squash Wellington were delighted to enter men's and women's (and junior men's and junior women's) teams for all three major national teams events in 2022.

## Seniors

The seniors were first up, with the NZ Senior Inter-District Teams Championship, held in Auckland in August. They put in some amazing performances against super tough competition, and it was great to see the team spirit shining through as they supported each other through the matches.

SENIOR WOMEN	SENIOR MEN
Becky Barnett – Homegrown	Evan Williams – Hutt City
Maiden-Lee Coe – Mana	Jonathan Barnett – Hutt City
Gemma Gee – Hutt City	Matt Green – Tawa
Taylor Jones – Tawa	Oliver Dunbar – Tawa
Abby Wotten – Tawa	Mike McCarroll – Thorndon





# PERFORMANCE

## Masters

Masters followed in September in Hamilton, with 8 of the 12 players in the team making their Wellington Representative Team debuts; fantastic to see the payoff of the players' (and coach!) hard work at squad camps and in competition in the build up to selection. The team did fantastically well to finish above their seeding.

MASTERS WOMEN	MASTERS MEN
Alissha Canning – Hutt City	Tim Seymour – Kāpiti
Lee-Ann Du Toit – Thorndon	Gary Aukett – Hutt City
Cheryl Sullivan – Island Bay	Matt Green – Tawa
Jeanne Yells – Khandallah	Evan Michelson – Island Bay
Leanne Dawson – Hutt City	Alf Izzett – Hutt City
Margaret Harlen – Tawa	Geordie Grieve – Tawa



# PERFORMANCE

## Juniors

Last up were the juniors, who were on home soil at Hutt City in October for the first of two consecutive years. The Wellington juniors, both rep team and non-rep team, put in some incredible mahi in the individual's competition which unfortunately led to two of the boys having to pull out of the teams event due to injury. Despite this, both the girls and boys teams finished above their seedings. The buzz and excitement at this event were palpable and initiated with a pōwhiri at the start of the competition. This was a new element to the event, which will be repeated in 2023, seeing the players parade in costumes and team colours before being welcomed to the venue by local iwi and the club.

In addition to the teams' awesome performances, Oli Dunbar also won the U17 title in the NZ Junior Champs, and Maiden-Lee Coe was crowned U17 North Island Champion.

JUNIOR WOMEN	JUNIOR MEN
Maiden-Lee Coe – Mana	Oliver Dunbar – Tawa
Mackenzie Tait – Masterton	Otis Brown – Island Bay
Sophia DeNardi-Gonzalez – Hutt City	Ben Jones – Red Star
Kyra Wyeth – Red Star	Patrick Nicholson – Martinborough
Molly Hawkins – Hutt City	Shay Gannon – Mana
	Bobby Stannard – Island Bay





# PERFORMANCE

## NZ Representation

As travel began to open again, we saw Wellington players proudly representing their country at all levels of competition.

## Juniors

Maiden-Lee Coe and Oliver Dunbar travelled to Nancy in France to represent New Zealand at the 2022 WSF World Junior Squash Championships. Held on 11-21 August, it was the first time the event has taken place since 2019.

Meanwhile, Mackenzie Tait was selected to represent NZ at the Trans-Tasman Junior test in Brisbane in August.

In December a number of Wellington Juniors travelled to North America to compete in the US and Canadian Junior Opens: Oliver Dunbar, Maiden-Lee Coe, Diana Galloway (Hutt City), Mackenzie Tait, Shay Gannon and Theo Gannon (Mana).

## Seniors

Early in the season, Evan Williams headed over to Glasgow in April to represent NZ at the WSF World Doubles Squash Championships. Pairing up with Kaitlyn Watts, they played some fast and furious matches against tough opponents from Scotland, Wales, India and Malaysia.

## Masters

In October, Matt Green was amongst the players selected to represent NZ at the Masters Trans-Tasman series. Ultimately defeated by the Aussies, lets see if they can get their own back on home soil in 2023.



# ANNUAL AWARDS

Attendees filled Mana Squash Rackets Club to capacity as we celebrated the remarkable achievements of Wellington players, clubs, teams, and volunteers over the 2022 season. Huge thanks to Scott, Tanya, Nick, Paul, and the rest of the team at Mana, plus In House Catering for the amazing kai which helped to create a fantastic atmosphere in which to acknowledge our people.

Award	Recipient	Award	Recipient
<i>Club of the Year</i>	Thorndon	<i>Player of the Year</i>	Maiden-Lee Coe
<i>Team of the Year</i>	Thorndon B Grade Men	<i>Player of the Year</i>	Evan Williams
<i>Volunteer of the Year</i>	Bryan Smith	<i>Junior Player of the Year</i>	Maiden-Lee Coe
<i>Special Recognition</i>	Tawa Court Four	<i>Junior Player of the Year</i>	Oliver Dunbar
<i>Coach of the Year</i>	Jack Shearer	<i>Masters Player of the Year</i>	Jeanne Yells
<i>Jade Wilson Memorial</i>	Nicola Ward-Thomas	<i>Masters Player of the Year</i>	Matt Green
<i>Initiative of the Year</i>	Wainuiomata Social In-House	<i>Most Improved Juniors</i>	Greer Gibbs & Liam Poskitt
<i>Best use of social media</i>	Island Bay Facebook	<i>Most Improved Seniors</i>	Ngahua Puketapu & Tyler McBride
<i>Slazenger Cup</i>	Island Bay	<i>Most Competitive Player</i>	Damien Hickling
<i>Outstanding Achievement</i>	Brett Simon - National Referee	<i>Most Competitive Club</i>	Mana



# Annual Awards

## Squash New Zealand Awards

Following on from our district awards, three of our winners went on to come out on top at national level! Huge congratulations to Oliver Dunbar – Squash New Zealand Most Improved Junior Player, Jack Shearer – Squash New Zealand Development Coach of the Year, and of course Thorndon Tennis & Squash Club – Squash New Zealand Club of the Year.

SQUASH NEW ZEALAND  
NATIONAL AWARDS 2022

Most Improved Junior Players

Oliver Dunbar (Wellington)



SQUASH NEW ZEALAND  
NATIONAL AWARDS 2022

Development Coach of the Year

Jack Shearer (Wellington)



SQUASH NEW ZEALAND  
NATIONAL AWARDS 2022

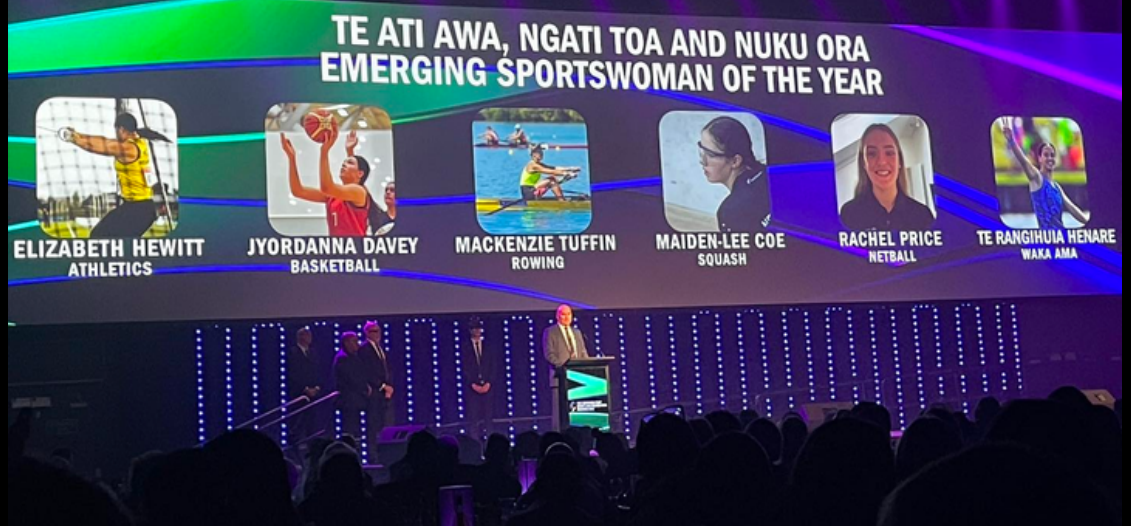
Club of the Year

Thorndon Squash & Tennis Club



## Nuku Ora Sport and Recreation Awards

It was fantastic to see Matt Green (Coach of the Year) and Maiden-Lee Coe (Emerging Talent) both nominated for awards at this level, representing squash and rubbing shoulders with their compatriots from a range of other sports. A huge congratulations to Ōtaki Sports Club for winning the Club of the Year Award.







# KEEP CALM AND PLAY SQUASH



Squash Wellington



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