

In the **Swing**

Squash Wellington Newsletter

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Welcome back to another year of In the SWing, and another year of squash in the Wellington district. First up, the big news: Squash Wellington has a home! Read on to hear all about our new base.

Our feature writer, Catharine Sayer, has landed a scoop this month as she sits down and speaks to Kaitlyn Watts about life as an emerging squash pro.

Even though it's still February, our season has already kicked off, with a doubles tournament (Tawa), an open (Ōtaki) and a masters (Hutt City) already completed, as well as the conclusion of the summer season of Masters Interclub. Some updates and pics included herewithin.

Russell Henderson, SW General Manager



Sponsors & Supporters



PARTICIPATION

Masters of Masters Series

The Hutt City Masters kicked off this year's Master of Masters Series – the biggest one yet, with seven rounds, culminating with the Wellington Masters in September.

We are delighted to announce our series sponsors for 2023: Skillsoft and Yellowhammer! These two organisations are both passionate about masters squash, and have joined forces to sponsor both the Master of Masters series, and the Wellington Masters.

Points are awarded for entering tournaments as well as wins, so the series really awards participation. Cash prizes are up for grabs for the top five women players, and the top five men players over the series.



Here is the list of 2023 Masters Tournaments:

- Hutt City Masters – 9–11 February (complete)
- Khandallah Masters – 11–12 March
- Wairarapa Juniors & Masters (@ Red Star) – 31 March–1 April
- Wainuiomata Masters – 12–13 May
- Tawa Masters – 26–27 May
- Kāpiti Masters – 4–5 August
- Wellington Masters (@ Mana) – 1–3 September

Hutt City Masters in review

A great way to kick off the year with the first of the series tournaments.

Held over three days it was a great way to ease into the season, although based on some head to heads I'm not sure 'ease' would have been the word used to describe some epic battles.

The first round saw a few 5 set matches kick off the tournament and the following two rounds continued that trend.

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Congratulations to the Hutt City inaugural champions, Nicki Gibbs (Kapiti) and Min Bristol (Masterton)

Division winners

- W2 – Margaret Harlen
- W3 – Bex McMorran
- W4 – Jenny Acton-Phillips
- M2 – Jason Samuel
- M3 – Charles Darr
- M4 – Bryan Smith
- M5 – Damien Lower



Hutt City inaugural champions, Nicki Gibbs (Kapiti) and Min Bristol (Masterton) with Neil Haxton – Co Club Captain Hutt City

PARTICIPATION

Masters Summer Interclub wrap up

And that's a wrap for the Masters Summer interclub round. It was finals night for most teams at Hutt City Squash and the games didn't disappoint.

Congrats to the division winners.

Div 1 - Island Bay

Div 2 - Hutt City

Div 3 - Red Star

Fantastic to see so many clubs represented with over 80 people playing across this round, great stuff everyone.



New Zealand Masters Games

In early February Whanganui hosted the 34th annual New Zealand Masters Games.

Regulars Sue Fisher and Pat Campbell from Mana, along with Kerry Woods, Michelle Burns and other Wellington players joined Masters from across Aotearoa to compete in this year's event featuring over 60 sports including Squash.

The ladies didn't disappoint on and off court coming home with eight medals, 3 golds, 4 silvers and a bronze. Won over individual and doubles format, that's an impressive haul!

Special mention goes to Sue Fisher who won gold in her individual age group and Sue and Kerry taking the doubles gold.

Held over 10 days and nights it's attended by thousands year on year. While sports is the key fixture, throughout the week there's also great entertainment with live bands and loads more around the Games Village. A real festival celebrating Masters sports and something for consideration for the years to come.



PERFORMANCE

Wellington and Central Junior One Day Challenger

After a number of years hiatus, the Junior one-day challenge is back.

In previous years this challenge was played between Central and Eastern, something we'd like to bring back in the future, but for now, starting with our close neighbours was a good way to get back into it.

The day is structured into age-groups from U11-U19 with each player having up to two games over the day.

With two players in each age group, we started with 20 juniors but as the day drew closer, we lost some due to illness, however, we still rocked up with an awesome team of 16.

Girls

Kora Gee, Hutt City (U11)
 Liberty Jones, Red Star (U13)
 Charlotte Milne, Tawa (U13)
 Greer Gibbs, Kapiti (U15)
 Lily Mcleod, Red Star (U15)
 Sophia DeNardi, Hutt City (U17)
 Diana Galloway, Hutt City (U19)
 Molly Hawkins, Hutt City (U19)

Boys

Joel Welch, Martinborough (U11)
 Jake Richardson, Upper Hutt (U11)
 Jake Sweeney, Martinborough (U13)
 Ethan Murphy, Red Star (U13)
 Ted Gibbs, Kapiti (U15)
 Alex Walsh, Mana (U17)
 Liam Poskitt, Wainuiomata (U17)
 Otis Brown, Island Bay (U19)

For most, this was the first time they represented Wellington, so it was an extra special day for them to put on the Black and Yellow kit.

There were some great performances across the age groups with some very close matches that could have gone either way. In the end our neighbours took the win this time...Congrats Team Central!

Overall, a great day out, especially for all the kids across Wellington and Central. Long may this challenge continue as a great steppingstone for all our juniors.

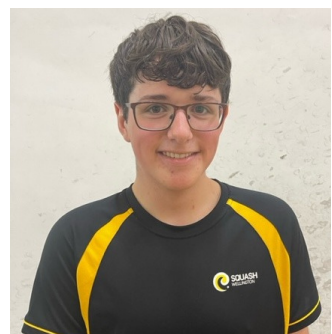
Well done to all the players, you were all simply awesome!

Check out our Facebook or Instagram pages for some pictures from the day.



PERFORMANCE

Wellington and Central Junior One Day Challenger



Clockwise

Joel Welch, Martinborough, Charlotte Milne-Tawa, Ethan Murphy-Red Star, Molly Hawkins-Hutt City, Jake Sweeney- Martinborough, Lily Mcleod-Red Star, Alex Walsh-Mana, Diana & Annabel, Liam Poskett - Wainuiomata Liberty Jones-Red Star, Ted Gibbs-Kapiti, Kora Gee-Hutt City

FEATURE ARTICLE

Watts Up

This month Kaitlyn Watts, enjoying her highest world ranking of 77, chats exclusively to In the SWing writer **Catharine Sayer** on the life of an emerging squash pro.

Most local women readers, having lost to Kaitlyn Watts at least once in their “careers”, will be shocked to learn that Palmerston North’s Kaitlyn Watts is only 21. It comes as a relief that Kaitlyn doesn’t volunteer memories of her comfortable win in three against her interviewer at a Foxton B& Below tournament many moons ago. Given the likely significance of the contest to Watts’ career path, we’ll ascribe her silence to modesty, that or politeness.

I’m meeting Watts to gain an insight into the life of a young pro giving the international scene a shot. Watts’s preference to meet in the Devoy Squash weights room over my offer of an upmarket cafe hints at the no-frills nature of the tour. Briefly back in New Zealand to compete, thanks to the first major PSA event in decades, Watts reveals that most of her time is spent in the Scottish capital, Edinburgh, training at Heriot-Watt University with Scotland’s national squad. Her way in to the training group was no accident: its assistant coach, Kylie Lindsay, is a



2021 Wellington Open Winners, Kaitlyn Watts (R) and, erm, whats-his-name-again, hang-on, it’ll-come-to-me, ah yes, Evan Williams (L)

former New Zealand international and its calibre is assured by the presence in a coaching capacity of recently retired Australian player Donna Lobban.

Watts’ fix of the club atmosphere so familiar to New Zealanders comes from membership of the Edinburgh Sports Club, Edinburgh’s pre-eminent racquets venue. Its offerings provide the community spirit so important for a newbie trying to navigate life in a new hemisphere. Watts enthuses about her new set-up, even praising the capital’s bus network on which her daily movements rely.

Lindsay has oversight of Watts’s weekly schedule, generally comprising one or two daily squash sessions with plenty of fitness thrown in. Lindsay herself, or the squad’s head coach Paul Bell, provide on-court technical input while Watts’s former coach, New Zealand international Kashif Shuja, based in Taupo, is available by phone for

FEATURE ARTICLE



miscellaneous advice on request. Pastoral and development wrap-around support comes courtesy of a monthly chat with a dedicated High Performance Sport New Zealand Performance Life Coach.

Navigating the professional squash tournament schedule, however, is a matter for Watts to figure out. Giving herself stretch opportunities in terms of available ranking points and game development and a chance of receiving a small amount of prizemoney (usually in the hundreds rather than thousands of euros) needs to be netted off against the attendance costs, the aim being “not to come out too much in the red”. Finding affordable accommodation is all part of the meticulous planning, players preferring to band together to find an AirBnB to avoid having to eat out for every meal.

It’s unclear whether tournament selection expertise warrants a B.A. or a B.Sc. but under Lindsay’s tutorship, her grade point average is solid.

Despite Watts being part of a small group of young Kiwi squash players trying to make their mark on the

pro tour, connectivity between them is minimal. Watts reports that it’s by luck rather than design should they find themselves playing the same tournament, although camaraderie is high when they do meet up, Watts reports, citing the World Doubles (Glasgow, 2022) and the Commonwealth Games (Birmingham, 2022) as prime examples.

Her chosen route to professional success—simply training and competing—is slightly going out of fashion, thanks to the crop of high achievers (well, obviously; we’re squashies) in both the men’s and women’s ranks who’ve preferred to earn Ivy League degrees with a side helping of college squash. That route is “good for some, but not for others”, suggests Watts, who seems to be thriving on the greater independence involved in her methodology.

Funding is slim but sufficient, with a small amount of prizemoney and New Zealand sponsorships—in exchange for occasional service endorsements and life updates—supplementing High Performance Sport New Zealand support. Watts’s motivation clearly lies away from money; we don’t discuss motivation in detail, but finding out just far how her talent, steely determination (as evidenced by her penchant for diving on the doubles court) and work ethic can get her seems to be what gets her out of bed on those cold Scottish mornings.

Watts gives off a relaxed vibe, perhaps down to spending quality time back home with her large family in between Nations Cup and NZ Open appearances. Her focus, she explains, is on improving her game:

“I’m confident that the ranking points will take care of themselves” is her mature prediction.

Given a leap of twelve places between our meeting and the latest publication, things are trucking along just nicely.

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

2023 Squash Wellington Squads announced – breaking records

Applications for the 2023 Squash Wellington Squad Programme closed last week, and we were overwhelmed with responses. It's amazing to see so much enthusiasm for this excellent programme as it continues to grow. This year we received over 85 applications, that's amazing.

The programme works in conjunction with Squash NZ's end-to-end pathway, and we are aiming to create a pipeline where players at Junior, Senior and Masters levels can progress at club, district, and national levels. With these greater numbers and wider range of interest we could well see an expansion of the programme in future years.

We were thrilled to see growth in the Junior, Senior, and Masters Squads, with Masters in particular growing massively. We couldn't resist getting in on the action here at Squash Wellington, with Board Members, Convenors and some Scottish guy signing up.

Don't feel like you have to go easy on us, Matt!

Junior Squad

Head Coach, Evan Williams.

Assistant Coach, Matt Green

Girls:

Sophia De Nardi-Gonzalez – Hutt City

Molly Hawkins – Hutt City

Charlotte Haxton – Hutt City

Greer Gibbs – Kāpiti

Sophie Sweeney – Martinborough

Liberty Jones – Red Star

Kyra Wyeth – Red Star

Lily Mcleod – Red Star

Melina Hogg – Tawa

Boys:

Liam Poskitt – Wainuiomata

Riley Priest – Upper Hutt

Boys continued:

Alex Fingleton – Khandallah

Krishiv Tarway – Khandallah

Ben Jones – Red Star

Anand Han – Kāpiti

James Rukuwai – Thorndon

Alex Walsh – Mana

Shay Gannon – Mana

Eamon Gannon – Mana

Patrick Nicholson – Masterton

Bobby Stannard – Island Bay

Senior Squad

Head Coach, Evan Williams

Men:

Shandon Scott – Island Bay

Jack Shearer – Island Bay

Rob McDonald – Island Bay

Oli Dunbar – Tawa (also in Junior Squad)

Marcelo De Nardi – Hutt City

Ben Allan – Thorndon

Paras Khanna – Thorndon (also in Masters Squad)

Mike McCarroll – Thorndon

Mitchell White – Thorndon

Josh Harrison – Thorndon

Lee Chambers – Khandallah (also in Masters Squad)

James Thompson – Khandallah

Rex Ulyatt – Khandallah

Matt Green – Tawa (also in Masters Squad)

Women:

Gemma Gee – Hutt City

Ellen Verry – Tawa

Abby Wotten – Tawa

Taylor Jones – Tawa

Hayley Richards – Thorndon

Mya Dalton – Thorndon

Sam Reyes – Thorndon

Hannah Grimmett – Ōtaki

Mackenzie Tait – Masterton

Maiden-Lee Coe – Mana

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

2023 Squash Wellington Squads announced – breaking records

Masters Squad

Head Coach, Matt Green.

Assistant Coach, Evan Williams

Women:

Cheryl Sullivan – Island Bay
 Anna Marquis-Skepetaris – Island Bay
 Lee-Ann Du Toit – Thorndon
 Jenni White – Thorndon
 Alissha Canning – Hutt City
 Diane Cardwell – Hutt City
 Ann Smith – Hutt City
 Emma Sanchez-Brown – Hutt City
 Leanne Dawson – Hutt City
 Nicki Gibbs – Kāpiti
 Jannah Wyeth – Red Star
 Roena Rogers – Wainuiomata
 Gabriela Gonzalez – Wainuiomata
 Jeanne Yells – Khandallah
 Carolyn Thompson – Khandallah
 Julie Geange – Club Kelburn
 Cindy Gordon – Club Kelburn
 Riana Rossouw – Tawa

Women continued:

Margaret Harlen – Tawa
 Emma Thorpe – Mana

Men:

Alf Izzett – Hutt City
 Carl Hamilton – Hutt City
 Bryan Smith – Hutt City
 Mark Grant – Hutt City
 Jason Canning – Hutt City
 Damien Lower – Wainuiomata
 James Fingleton – Khandallah
 Shane Johnston – Khandallah
 Russell Henderson – Island Bay
 Tim Seymour – Kāpiti
 Mark Millar – Kāpiti
 Damon Winter – Tawa
 Geordie Grieve – Tawa
 Richie Hoare – Tawa
 Gill Du Toit – Thorndon
 James Gould – Mana
 Mike O’Sullivan – Club Kelburn

Coach Development Programme – seeking expressions of interest

Squash Wellington has a vision of coaches of all ages, cultures and genders being available across our clubs to help people at all stages of their squash career.

We’re committed to growing our coaching talent base by providing a home-grown programme that helps people get started on (or stay committed to) the coaching journey.

If you’re interested in helping out people at your club through coaching, whether one-to-one or in groups, and want to pick up and share ideas and tips in informal settings from others going through the same thing, this is for you!

The content and delivery format of the programme will be co-designed by you according to your needs, and run from June to October, but first we need you to express your interest.

You can do that by contacting our General Manager, Russell Henderson at admin@squashwellington.org.nz



SUSTAINABILITY

Squash Wellington HQ

It's been a long time in the making, but we can now announce that Squash Wellington officially has a base! We have moved into an office on the first floor of Club Kelburn, so feel free to pop in and say hi. Russell is there midweek most days, and we also have meeting space for our coaches, convenors and board members, as well as access to Club K's excellent (and ever improving) squash and gym facilities.

A huge thanks goes out to a number of people for making this possible: Squash NZ for providing the space, Susan, Michaela and the team at Club Kelburn for welcoming us and helping us to settle in, the Squash Wellington Board for negotiating the agreement with Squash NZ, and AZ Flooring for donating furniture and fittings.

If you haven't been to Club Kelburn for a while, it's well worth a visit – you might be amazed by the transformation.



National Promotion campaign

Squash New Zealand has recently announced a new promotional campaign to help grow awareness and participation in Squash across the country.

Between 1 – 30 April, targeted ads will run across social media platforms educating potential new participants on how to 'Try It, Play It, and Love It' through an automated email journey leading them into clubs around the country.

Emails have been sent out to all clubs, but in case you missed it, to sign up your club, click this [link](#), head to the Squash NZ Website for more information, or email Events and Promotion Manager Tyler Duberly on tyler@squashnz.co.nz.

Squash Smart – Online platform

With less than a year until My Squash launches, what better time than now to sign up and boost your squash-related skills and knowledge for free on Squash Smart?

This is just one of the elements which will be integrated into the new My Squash platform, but you can get ahead now and enrol in a range of courses on coaching, club management and more.

Head to www.squashsmart.co.nz to sign up and get involved.



COMING UP

Wellington vs Central Junior Challenge - 26 February

Tawa Ladies Open - 3-4 March

Island Bay One Dayer B & Below - 11 March

Khandallah Masters - 11-12 March

Wainuiomata Open - 17-18 March

HEAD 800 @ Khandallah - 19 March

Tawa A2 & Below - 24-25 March

HEAD9HUNDY @ Island Bay - 26 March

Squash Wellington AGM, Upper Hutt Squash Club - 27 March

Wairarapa Masters @ Red Star - 31 March

\$25 ENTRY FEE

GO TO **ISQUASH** TO ENTER AND FOR FULL DETAILS

ISLAND BAY

SUMMER B & BELOW

1 DAYER

SAT 11TH MARCH

IT'S ALWAYS SUMMER IN THE BAY

64 LIMITED SPACES

Khandallah
TENNIS & SQUASH CLUB INC. Est. 1999

2023 KHANDALLAH MASTERS

9 - 11 March 2023

Part of the Master of Masters Series
Enter via iSquash before Friday 3 March
Entry fee \$40 (supper included)
Saturday finish
CASH PRIZES
PAR15

Locals may be required to play Thursday

Tournament contact: jeanne.yells@hotmail.co.nz - 021 227 6137

WSQ

Miro Homes Wainuiomata Squash Open 2023

Cost: \$40

Where: Wainuiomata Squash Club
Dates: 16-19 March 2023
Enter: via iSquash
Contact: Radar 021 190 2725
Email: darin@abodeac.co.nz

MIRO HOMES & SUBDIVIDING

Tournaments with great HEAD prizes

HEAD

Women's 800 & Below squash series 2023

Tournament	Date
Khandallah Tracy Meers shelbybain@khandallah.co.nz	Sunday 19 March
Upper Hutt Brett Green Squashupperhutt@gmail.com	Sunday 23 April
Club Kelburn admin@club.co.nz	Sunday 21 May
Red Star Mel Morris melmorris@redstar.co.nz	Sunday 18 June
Thorndon Mike McCarroll mike.mccarroll@thorndon.co.nz	Sunday 6 August
Wainuiomata Shelby Burns shelbyburns@wainuiomata.co.nz	Series final Sunday 10 September

The HEAD womens 800 series is designed to introduce women players to competitive tournament play. It's also a great way to learn the rules of the game to build confidence in refereeing and marking games.

Every tournament you enter gives you a greater chance to win HEAD products.

Each player receives **5 points** for entering each tournament, **1 point** for each loss and **3 points** for every win. (max of 14 points for each tournament).

Entry: \$5 per tournament
Games Start: 10:00am
Matches: 3 matches per tournament
Scoring: PAR15, best of 3 games

To enter each tournament go to www.squash.org.nz/sit/dashboard

SQUASH WELLINGTON

in association with...

WATERSMITH PLUMBING AND GAS

TAWA A2 & BELOW

23RD TO 26TH MARCH

*** SUNDAY FINISH ***

ENTRY FEES

INDIVIDUAL: \$25:00
FAMILY: \$50:00
J GRADE*: \$10:00

*J GRADE SUBJECT TO SUITABLE ENTRIES BEING RECEIVED
ENTRIES CLOSE FRIDAY 17TH MARCH

Enter on **iSquash** at... squash.org.nz/sit/homepage
or contact... **Aaron Hayill**
Mbl: 0277 775 038
E-Mail: clubcaptain@tawasquash.co.nz
Club Ph: 04 232 8200

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT!
IF YOU ARE FROM A FLOOD AFFECTED AREA...
FREE ENTRY & FOOD!

WATERSMITH PLUMBING AND GAS

7 tournaments with great prizes

HEAD

9HUNDY & BELOW SQUASH SERIES 2023

Tournament	Date
ISLAND BAY Convenor: Matt Vee Email: mattvee@yahoo.co.nz	26th MARCH
RED STAR Convenor: Mel Morris Email: melmorris@redstar.co.nz	30TH APRIL
WAINUIOMATA Convenor: Andy Cooper Email: andycooper990@gmail.com	28TH MAY
MANA Convenor: Ben Jensen Email: juniors@manasquash.co.nz	25th JUNE
MARTINBOROUGH Convenor: Marco De Groot Email: marco.de.groot@gmail.com	23RD JULY
UPPER HUTT Convenor: Ien & Chris Priest Email: juniorsquashupperhutt@gmail.com	6TH AUGUST
HUTT CITY (Final) Convenor: Neil Haxton Email: neilhaxton21@gmail.com	27TH AUGUST

The HEAD 9 Hundy series is designed to encourage junior players into competitive tournament play.

Entry fee: \$5 per tournament
Start: 9am
Matches: 3 matches per player per tournament
Scoring: PAR 11, best of 3 sets

Open to all junior players 800 grading points and below as at 26th March 2023.

If either player is 500 points or below, a blue dot ball must be used.

Every tournament you enter gives you a greater chance to win HEAD swag and other great prizes.

To enter each tournament go to www.squash.org.nz/sit/dashboard or contact the respective convenor listed above

SQUASH WELLINGTON