

In the **SWing**

Squash Wellington Newsletter

MAY-KING JUNE SEEM TOO SOON?

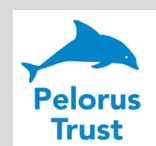
Kia ora, and welcome to another edition of In the SWing, our monthly newsletter. Woefully, this May 2023 issue lands just inside the month of June. Fear not, though; the edition makes up for the wait, being packed full of updates from around the district, as well as featuring the eagerly anticipated final part of star reporter Catharine Sayer's technology trilogy. Rather than focusing on the here and now, however, this time Catharine interviews someone responsible for introducing tools to squash coaching which were cutting edge at the time, yet now live in your pocket.

The squash season is really cooking currently as we reach the halfway stage of Winter Interclub, Mitchell Cup and Cousin's Shield are currently being contested, SuperChamps is just round the corner, and, of course, the Wellington Open takes place at Hutt City next week. We'll see you there!

Russell Henderson, SW General Manager



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PARTICIPATION

HEAD Junior 9Hundy – Round 3

A huge thanks to Andy Cooper, recently anointed as Junior Convenor at Wainuiomata, (as well as the rest of the fab club committee), for running a fantastic round of the Junior 9Hundy series last weekend. The event saw 36 juniors leaving it all out on the courts; such good numbers, we wonder if the 'bonus points' incentive helped to lure the young players via their competitive natures?! We shall find out when the series arrives at Martinborough in July, as that is the other round with double the points for entering.

Thank you to Wainuiomata and Red Star for the pics of the day. Next round is at Mana on Sunday 25 June. Get your entries in, juniors!



HEAD Women's E & Below – Round 3

Club Kelburn was thrilled to have hosted the most recent round of the women's E & Below tournament. A huge thanks to Michaela, Club K manager, for hosting, running a successful event, and of course for her home baking! And another big thank you goes to eminent Wellington squash divas Ann Smith, Sam 'Rocket' Reyes, and Catharine Sayer for creating the draws, helping run the day, as well as supplying the photos (on next page).

We saw another solid 15 entries, with a particularly great turnout from Wainuiomata. At least one player 'graduated' into D grade as a result of a couple of good wins, and with a fair few players now in the 800-899 pts range, we're glad we extended the scope of the competition format this year.

Next up is Red Star, on Sunday 18 June. Get involved!

PARTICIPATION

HEAD Women's E & Below – Round 3 (cont.)



PARTICIPATION

Master of Masters

From Bryan Smith, Headmaster of 'Master of Masters'.

The fourth and fifth rounds of the Masters of Masters series were completed recently at Wainuiomata and Tawa respectively. Thanks to the Wainui and Tawa crew for putting on such awesome tournaments ... oh mmm how good were those Harold burgers and eclairs from Jenny Mae at Wainui and the member supplied food at Tawa? Delicious!!! The tournaments were held in great spirit with some epic games!

With 5 of the 7 rounds completed, the points are very close which is fantastic. This year the 2 lowest pointing rounds will be dropped which could alter some positions on the leader board. As Lloyd says in the Dumb and Dumber movie "...so your tellin' me there's a chance!"



PARTICIPATION

Master of Masters Series Update (cont.)



Here's the current leader board following the weekend at Tawa.

Ladies:

Ann Smith	1st 66
Rianna Rossouw	2nd 58
Roena Rogers	3rd equal 53
Emma Sanchez-Brown	3rd equal 53
Honor Greyling	4th 47
Lee-Ann Du Toit	5th 43
Nicki Gibbs	6th 42
Erena Tapiata	7th 39
Catharine Sayer	8th 36
Gabriela Gonzalez	9th 35
Laura Nanai	10th 33

Men:

Vance Kapene	1st 70
Damien Lower	2nd 68
Alf Izzett	3rd 66
Michael Leigh	4th 58
Kent Hawkins	5th 54
Matthew Leahy	6th 53
Karl Hewiit	7th 48
Bryan Smith	8th 46
Gill Du Toit	9th equal 39
Stephen Garrett	9th equal 39
Peter Morahan	9th equal 39
James Poskitt	9th equal 39
Lars Stannard	9th equal 39
Isaac Hastings	10th 37

The next round is at Kapiti on 4-5 August, get your entry in now if you haven't already!

PARTICIPATION

Pink Shirt Day

Pink Shirt Day was on Friday 19 May, and it has now been held in New Zealand for 15 years. People from all walks of life wore pink to raise awareness of this cause, which seeks to stamp out bullying by celebrating diversity and promoting kindness and inclusion.

Many of our Wellington women wore pink for their Interclub ties that week – check out the photos.



CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

Wellington Squads

On Sunday 11 May, for the first time, Hutt City hosted not one, not two, but all three of the Wellington Squads, as the Seniors, Juniors, then Masters filled the courts and gave it their all.

Seniors and Juniors

This was camp number 3 for the Seniors and Juniors, and before getting amongst it, Head Coach Evan Williams enjoyed hearing about the players' form as many have been playing back-to-back tournaments during this busy part of the playing season. He then led the sessions which focused on volleys, after identifying this as a weak area in many players' games, having attended a couple of recent tournaments with his watchful coach's eye.



CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT



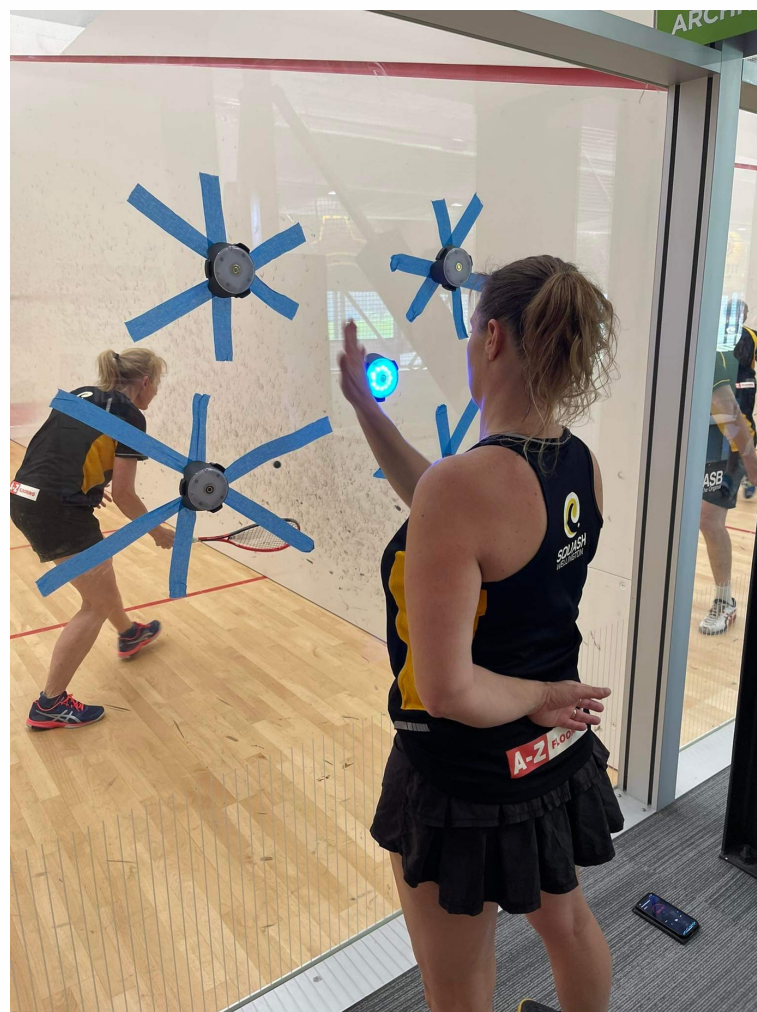
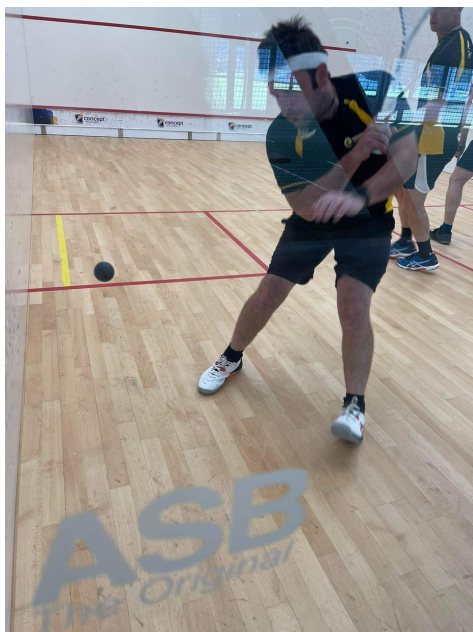
Wellington Squads (cont.)

Some words on the Masters camp from Masters Convenor, Bryan Smith:

The squad had their first camp on 11 May, with no less than 28 players training! Head Coach Matt Green, and Assistant Coach Evan Williams did a great job in running the session.

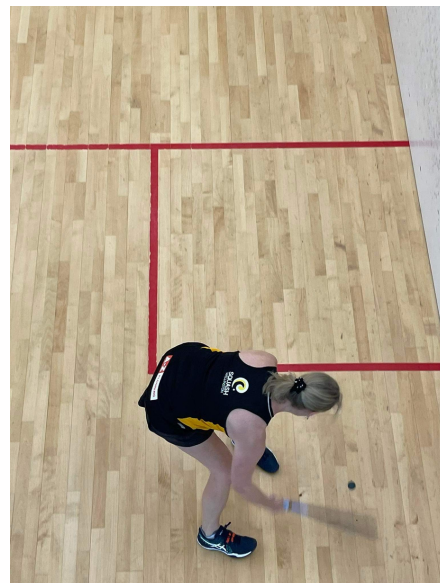
Some hard mahi was put in by all attendants and some very tired bodies were the end result. However, as the old saying goes, “with no pain there is no gain”.

The next camp for all three squads will be on Sunday 18 June.



CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

Wellington Squads (cont.)



World Junior Squash Championships Team Announcement

We were thrilled to see not just one, but two of our incredible junior players selected to represent Aotearoa at the upcoming World Junior Squash Championships, to be held in Melbourne on 18-29 July.

Maiden-Lee Coe (Mana), and Oliver Dunbar (Tawa), have each been picked to travel across the Ditch and participate in their respective individuals events, with Maiden-Lee also named as a reserve for the girls' team event. See team announcement and poster below with obligatory Aussie abbreviation (ok, it's an acronym, sorry, 'acky').



FEATURE ARTICLE

Squash Tech Part 3: Sherryn El Bakary

In Part 3 of the tech series, intrepid reporter **Catharine Sayer** goes back in time to uncover a tale of classic Kiwi ingenuity, yarn about the heady world of the global pro squash tour in the 1970s and 1980s and learn how to really work the sports media.

At the New Zealand Open in Tauranga, I'm discussing my intended tech series with a Squash NZ Hall of Famer, and since I look the part with the press pass and a laptop, she confides in me that it might be worth giving her girlfriend Sherryn El Bakary a ring. El Bakary's a real estate agent on Waiheke Island, apparently, and has the gift of the gab. I'm unaware of any squash club on Waiheke, but with a Middle Eastern-sounding surname, I wonder about an Egyptian connection, and stuff the serviette with the biro-scrawled contact details into my bag anyway.

El Bakary, being an estate agent, has first class client care and returns my call within 20 minutes. We figure that tea-time is as good as any and embark on a helter-skelter journey through three decades of squash. The tech aspect is only the start. Well, the early middle, by rights, but let's get into that before we get explore other aspects of this remarkable lady's squash life.

Instant replay

El Bakary's gift to racquet sports was the invention of video recording and instant playback during a squash coaching session. It



Sherryn El Bakary, for all your Waiheke Island real estate needs.

may not sound revolutionary, particularly when anyone training with a pal – or even solo – can reach for their smartphone to record the action. Back in 1981, however, it certainly was.

Watching her second (late) husband, Dardir El Bakary, coach, Sherryn hit on the idea of using video footage to “mentally create the groove” for players of how the shot was to be played, “marrying up what Dardir was telling them with a visual image”. Sherryn backed herself and bought the best camera possible on the back of her hunch that this was what would take her husband's coaching to the next level. She wasn't put off by the gear, although it was heavy, awkward and required a separate monitor for playback.

Of course, the coachee wouldn't always get it right first time, but with each attempt filmed and played back, Dardir could show visually what tweaks were needed.

FEATURE ARTICLE



Sherryn and Dardir El Bakary, c.1988, Dublin

Not only was she motivated to purchase the best-in-class equipment, she taught herself how to film and edit (“oh, that was easy”) and found herself an indispensable part of the coaching package. Thanks to Sherryn’s innovation, the couple’s coaching business went from strength to strength, and the pair frequently flew to far flung squash clubs throughout New Zealand before Dardir found himself in hot demand once again in the northern hemisphere.

Homegrown talent

In New Zealand, Dardir coached Bruce Brownlee, Stu Davenport and Ross Norman (highest world rankings of 6, 3 and 2, respectively) and it was,

“genuinely lovely helping these players. Dardir’s techniques, including the video

footage, made a huge difference to every player and we loved the opportunity to help grow these talents. [As a camera operative], you are invisible to the players you film and it’s a real privilege to capture their real-time reactions to the ball.”

On one of the El Bakarys’ coaching tours, the couple recognised the 14 year old Glen Wilson of Upper Hutt as an “amazing talent” and promptly organised an Auckland billet and schooling for him so that Dardir could coach him in every spare minute he could find. Sherryn often videoed Wilson and relished the opportunity to observe “his wide-eyed reactions to both the ball and Dardir’s instructions.”

Wilson achieved the potential spotted by the El Bakarys by realising three Commonwealth Games doubles medals and building a solid professional career, reaching a world ranking of 24, only to later become a national coach and enter the New Zealand Squash Hall of Fame.

Natty threads

Filming and playback gear wasn’t cheap in New Zealand’s pre-market economy of the early 1980s, but sufficient funds had been raised on the back of the El Bakarys’ gift not just to racquet sports but to anyone vaguely sporty in the Upper North Island: tracksuits. Yes, sadism wasn’t the only reason P.E. teachers were loathe to let their pasty charges limber up in comfort: even by the mid 1970s athleisurewear was as yet unknown to New Zealand. Once learning of the tracksuit’s entrance into the world of sport, they stocked every brand they could lay their hands on in their vast and booming sports shop in the

FEATURE ARTICLE

basement of George Court's iconic K-Road department store.

Mr Personality

Once the successful business had been sold to Stirling Sports in 1981, Sherryn was now freed up to travel with Dardir. Accompanying him to coaching gigs to transcribe his "colourful and exciting language that sounded exciting and fresh" into articles for the UK-based Squash Player magazine – officially penned by Dardir – was not only Sherryn's entry into the world of squash journalism but planted the seed for her filming idea.

Despite the couple's marriage eventually ending in divorce, Sherryn is horrified when I politely enquire whether she resented Dardir being credited for her articles.

"Of course not! They were his words – even though he was illiterate – and he was brilliant. He was Mr Personality, so much fun. He was his own worst enemy, though, as he was taken advantage of through not being able to say "no". Everybody loved him. He was adored."

Similarly she refuses any credit for the success of Dardir's coaching business, despite admitting that the video capture and playback was a highly effective point of difference.

"Yes, the videoing was my thing and was unique in the global squash world and appreciated by many players, but really it was Dardir who had the talent and the flair. He was colourful and everything he did was a delight. He was never boring. He was an entertainer and a household name practically, in New



Sherryn (front, centre), and Dardir (fourth left, standing) in Cincinnati with trainee US squash coaches

FEATURE ARTICLE

Zealand. That all changed when he became a devout Muslim and wanted nothing to do with the world of squash that had been his life until that point."

Sherryn's reluctance to step into the limelight is borne out when she is unable to find any pictures of the filming gear, let alone her operating it:

"Nobody ever took photos of me; I was always up right up the back of the courts where I could have the whole vista and could zoom in close if needed."

Trust me, I'm a squashie

Gaining people's trust and respect crept up on the El Bakarys without them really noticing. Sherryn talks fondly of a trip to Invercargill, whose first session involved a junior coaching camp under the watchful eyes of a large contingent of adults. Her camera malfunctioned, and the children's hopes fell of seeing film of themselves in action.

Undeterred, Sherryn raced to an appliance store and talked the staff into lending her retail gear for the session. Marvelling at the store's generosity on the way back to the courts, it was only then that Sherryn realised she hadn't been asked to leave anything as security, let alone a name and number.

First name terms

Dardir's household name status ("he was always just Dardir, never Mr El Bakary") derived from his lengthy stint as coach in the 1960s of squash's first female superstar, Australia's Helen McKay, winner of 16 consecutive British Opens and 2 World Championship titles. After his own successful

professional career, Dardir managed to permanently leave the turmoil of Egypt under the reign of King Faroukh and settled in Australia where he met and married his first wife and had two children.

The tobacco giant Rothmans, then New Zealand's major sponsor of the world's healthiest sport, enticed Dardir over the Tasman to be the New Zealand men's team coach. This role—now with Sherryn at this side—Dardir held for many years, presiding over New Zealand's men appearing in World Championship campaigns in Egypt (1985), England (1987) and Malaysia (1989) interspersed with running international coaching clinics in Spain (where he had established a permanent coaching school), France, the Netherlands and Malaysia.

It's all about length

On one lengthy overseas tour to Britain, Sherryn found herself cheffing for a day job at London's Metropolitan Club where Dardir coached, then accompanied him to the English elite sport institute in Lilleshall where the Squash Racquets Association's boys' U17 team were in his charge, and the Colets club in Surrey.

Ghostwriting books of Dardir's coaching philosophies as well as magazine columns in her spare time led to freelance match reporting of tournaments to while away the hours accompanying Dardir with his teams.

My ears prick for squash journalism pearls of wisdom and Sherryn doesn't disappoint.

"At the big tournaments, every morning the

FEATURE ARTICLE

organisers would post up the press clippings of the previous day's play. The big names in squash writing, Colin McQuillan and Richard Eaton, would invariably have their columns from the main dailies pasted up. But I found out that the more words I wrote, the more the editors would print, and with my greater column inches, I was seen by the event staff as the most prominent writer. They'd give me the first pick of the seats to catch the action and that was remarkable, being a complete amateur."

There goes my patent for the "write it and they will come" approach, then (*as we discussed; don't let a small matter like a word count get in the way of a good yarn! - ed*).

Full circle

There's time for one last anecdote—although Sherryn tells me there are plenty more, for her recollection of the squash years is crystal clear—which fittingly takes us back to where it all began; with the tracksuits.

"One of my articles about Dardir's methods actually led to him being courted by the American squash association, who needed someone to turn Ivy League hardball coaches into squash coaches, after realising that squash had more global appeal than hardball. I persuaded Dardir to take the gig but not until after quadrupling his normal fee, having picked up that Americans put great store in people who have a high sense of self-worth. They accepted without blinking an eye and put us up in a Cincinatti penthouse previously used to shoot a few scenes for the movie Rainman."

Despite years of city living, the big and brash American approach still jarred with the girl from Masterton:

"My three tracksuits looked rather lonely hanging in the closet the size of a master bedroom,"

Sherryn remarks wryly, and with that I'm left dreaming about the movie set to which my moneyball article will take me.



El Bakarys with Ross Norman

SUSTAINABILITY

Club Captains Hui

**Hosted by Tawa Squash Club,
Monday 15 May.**

A big thank you to the Club Captains and committee members who attended our hui on 15 May and thank you also to Tawa for hosting. Unfortunately, the Remutaka Hill was closed (Interclub players will know all about this), so we hurriedly organised an additional remote session for Wairarapa clubs the following day to share and gather views relating to the previous night's discussion. Incidentally, a top tip was shared by Jackie Steventon from Martinborough on the best place to check for Remutaka road closures (as well as other road closures) which is the "Traffic Updates - Horowhenua Kapiti Wellington" Facebook page.

A big part of the discussion was around SuperChamps, with Wellington introducing an appendix this year regarding player transfers, which is similar to the process followed by other districts around NZ. It was extremely useful to gather the views of clubs on the rationale and execution of this, as well as share some excellent ideas for future years.

We also had the chance to discuss and share ideas around Interclub, Masters squash, the use of F grade (please use it for new players!), and ideas for buddying with other clubs and sports around our district and beyond.

Whānau Day - Te Whanganui a Tara Māori poipātū

**From Pam Roffey, Te Whanganui a Tara
Māori poipātū:**

On Sunday, May 28th, members of Te Whanganui a Tara Māori poipātū came together for a Whānau Day. Ōtaki squash club, famed for its manaakitanga, turned on a terrific day for us all.

With Labour Weekend's Ngā Hau e Whā squash tournament fast approaching, we came together to remember and reflect, for some fast and furious squash, to catch up with faces old and new, and indulge in some delicious kai. To make an enjoyable day even better, we also did some kapa haka and rusty voices and haka moves were remembered and dusted off thanks to our ever-patient tutors, Tasha, Kiri, and Tipi. We also received a surprise taonga as Tasha and Tipi had composed a new waiata for us to learn, and use, going forward.

With full bellies and hearts, we agreed to meet again at Mana Squash Club, on Sunday, June 18th, at 12, to do it all again. If you would like to join us, come along as all are welcome! It's a day for young and old to meet some people, play some squash, learn some skills (both on and off the court) and enjoy some food together. Nau mai, haere mai!

COMING UP

Kāpiti B & Below – 2-3 June

Wellington Open @ Hutt City – 9-11 June

Khandallah Open – 16-17 June

Women's E & Below @ Red Star – 18 June

Upper Hutt Open – 22-24 June

Junior 9Hundy @ Mana – 25 June

Island Bay Open – 30 June-1 July

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22nd – 24th June (Sat Finish)
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