

BACKGROUND

In 2004 the Devonport Squash Club embarked on the development of a junior coaching programme designed to provide new and aspiring junior boys and girls an opportunity to receive regular coaching in the technical aspects of squash. It was anticipated that from here players who wanted to would then go on to represent the club at regional Interclub competitions and regional and national squash tournaments.

In late 2004 the first course was run with 5 junior members attending. The small group allowed the club to trial the format and make any necessary adjustments to the content and delivery of the programme as they went along. Feedback was also solicited from participants, their parents, other club members and the community.

In 2005 the club introduced a 6 week (5 weeks of coaching, 1 week of assessments) coaching programme to be run 4 times per year. The programme was conducted by the clubs's level 1 coaches. The programmes content was based on the Squash New Zealand Junior Skills Programme with participant's skills being assessed using the Squash NZ Assessments set out in the Junior Skills Awards. Certificates were awarded to players on the successful completion of the skills assessment.

As the participation rates grew the club required more qualified coaches. To facilitate this they provided financial assistance to club members to attend the SNZ Level 1 coaching course. Currently the club has 9 level 1 coaches - 3 of whom are juniors - assisting in the running of the programme.

At the end 2005 the first group of programme participants had completed the 6 elements (1 Star, 2 Star, 3 Star, Bronze, Silver, and Gold) of the course and were ready for more advanced coaching. In 2006 the club introduced an advanced/elite squad, catering for the best 5 players from the 2005 intake. In 2007 a junior team was entered into the senior interclub competition. As more players completed the programme the club employed the services of a high performance coach to coach advanced/elite coaching squads.

With the growth in numbers attending the programme, came a demand from some of the more experienced players to play competitively. To accommodate their desire for competition and to provide a stepping stone to senior interclub, the club established a junior interclub tournament run on a Sunday morning in association with Belmont Park Racquets Club.

In 2008 the coaching programme will continue with the expectation that two girls teams will compete in the senior interclub competition.

PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

- A club member serves as the Junior Coaching Coordinator, responsible for the development and delivery of the programme. They also serve as the main contact person.
- Prospective participants are encouraged to enrol early in each school term. The majority of advertising and promotion is via word of mouth from current programme participants. Some advertising is done via the local community newspaper and school newsletters.
- The programme is run on a Thursday evening between 5pm and 7pm. Courts are made available between these times.
- A beginners evening is run for new players to attend and receive an introduction to the game. At this point new players squash skills are assessed. Once assessed, players are then placed in a coaching group with other players that have a similar skill level.
- Participants pay \$25 for a 6 week coaching programme or \$12 per individual lesson.
- Participating coaches – both junior and senior - are paid \$10 - \$12 per hour.
- Four courses are run each year (one course per school term). Each course runs for 6 weeks and incorporates 5 weeks of coaching and 1 week of assessment.
- Each coaching session is limited to 4 participants per coach and runs for 1 hour.
- Participants are assessed using the Squash New Zealand Junior Skills Programme.
- A progress chart listing the participant's names, the list of skills levels they have to attain and a record of the levels they have completed in SNZ skills programme is displayed on the club notice board (see Appendix 1).
- A personal development programme (PDP) is displayed on the club notice board. This consists of an excel spreadsheet line graph that visually shows the players progress through the grading list. Ranking points are recorded and graphed to show the players progress throughout the year. (See Appendix B).
- Junior players are encouraged to attend a SNZ coaching course. Once they are qualified they are invited to participate in the programme as a coach.

- Where possible an awards ceremony is held to celebrate participant's successful completion of each award and to present them with their certificate.
- The High Performance Coach has developed his own skills matrix and runs programmes through each school term to challenge the more talented players to realise their potential.
- Programme coaches are offered the opportunity to conduct personal coaching with juniors that want extra assistance. The coach charges \$10 per hour.
- Programme participants are encouraged to invite their friends along to a coaching evening.

GROWTH OF THE DEVONPORT JUNIOR SQUASH CLUB MEMBERSHIP

	2003	2004 Programme Started	2005	2006	2007	Membership Increase from the start of the programme in 2004
Junior Men	3	2	16	34	29	27
Junior Woman	2	1	7	16	16	15
Total	5	3	23	50	45	42

KEYS TO RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL SQUASH YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

1. Incorporate a fun, non-competitive element into the programme.
2. Group people according to ability. Provide them with opportunities to play regardless of ability and cater for all standards of skill.
3. Encourage participation, effort, and improvement.
4. Increase and support social aspects of the club to make it more inclusive of youth. Encourage participants to bring friends along, invite them to the club, and stage social events and fun tournaments.
5. Provide social leagues for youth. Not all participants want to be involved in structured competition.
6. Provide a structured coaching programme that offers participants a clearly defined and visible pathway to improvement.
7. Ensure **qualified** coaches are available to deliver the programme.
8. Use modern technology to communicate with the programme participants i.e. text messaging, web site for results and draws, e-newsletters for the latest news and upcoming events.
9. Maintain an up to date database.
10. Encourage parental involvement. Communicate regularly with parents about their child's progress.

APPENDIX A: EXAMPLE OF PARTICIPANTS PROGRESS CHART

Name	1 Star	2 Star	3 Star	Bronze	Referee	Silver	Gold
Andrew Jones							
Kim Smith							
Abbey Haines							
John Grand							
Andrea Kennedy							
Pam Abbott							
Matthew Rogers							
John Royal							
Anne Thompson							
Brian Emerson							
Susan Boon							

APPENDIX B: EXAMPLE OF PARTICIPANTS GRADING PROGRESS REPORT

