



# CASE STUDY:

INNOVATIVE WAYS OF INCREASING  
PARTICIPATION AND MEMBERSHIP

**OTOROHANGA SQUASH CLUB**



**SQUASH**  
NEW ZEALAND

## OVERVIEW

Four years ago the Otorohanga Squash Club was running a business house competition which had previously been well supported but was struggling to get full teams turning up and playing each week due to time and other commitments. It was decided that a change was needed to breathe new life into the club as it was no longer stimulating enough for existing graded players to be involved. This had a flow on effect of very few new players joining in at a social level and moving through to competitive squash.

### CHALLENGES

#### Environment

The club identified the current structure was no longer providing the stimulation for members.

#### Competing Interests

Finding the right day and times to suit members leisure, family and other commitments as not every participant was available every day.

#### Ability

Creating an environment where players of all abilities could play together.

### SOLUTIONS

#### Scheduling

After consulting with members, the club decided Monday nights from 6pm was the most suitable day to allow members to achieve balance with interclub, other trainings, competitions and general commitments.

#### Social Competitions

New 3-week (4-draw) mini competitions were created with match times texted the night before.

#### Draws

Draws were mixed gendered and handicapped to enable stronger players to play with lower graded players. Doubles draws were also included every 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> round to maintain interest levels.

### RESULTS

40

Players attending each week on average.

10

Kids on average attending the club each week with 6 taking part.

New

Junior coaching course created to cater for demand.

## CONCLUSION

The club recognised that complacency was becoming an issue and that they needed to review the format and timeframe to offer an interesting and viable experience. Consulting with members to take a new flexible approach of scheduling suitable times and mixing the draw to use more experienced players as mentors to further challenge them whilst assisting the less experienced players to develop by exposing different styles of play has proven successful so far. This model has seen an increase in the number of interclub teams and new members competing and has had the flow-on effect of a new coaching programme for junior players. Club President Brian Hodge notes that "the atmosphere at the club is once again fun and friendly with new players being made welcome and meeting new people."