



CASE STUDY:

INNOVATIVE WAYS OF CREATING A GREAT
JUNIOR EXPERIENCE

TIMARU SQUASH CLUB



SQUASH
NEW ZEALAND

OVERVIEW

Findings show that most juniors are introduced to the game of squash through a family member. If all squash clubs create a positive junior environment today, they can expect to experience the influx in membership when today's juniors mature and become our members of the future. Juniors are a long-term strategy and if we do it right, we will have played our part in the future sustainability of squash clubs. The volunteer-led Timaru Squash Club have acknowledged this and have put a plan in place to ensure they safeguard the game for the future. Previously juniors paid for their membership, got some coaching and had access to the club. Now they receive coaching every week, take part in new Kiwi Squash programmes, plus the club provides access for them to use the courts for an hour every day (provided they are members).

CHALLENGES

Club needs

Research shows that clubs are being led by and are focusing on the happier members at the expense of newer and younger members.

Coaches

There is a perception that coaches need to know a lot about the game in order to coach. Furthermore, a lot of volunteers who now coach were brought up through drills and formal routines.

Activities

Research shows that kids play sport to have fun and play games with their friends, not take part in formal training and focusing on winning.

SOLUTIONS

Junior Coordinator

A Junior Coordinator position exists on the committee to ensure the needs of juniors are discussed and considered. This ensures that the club is interested in providing a culture that supports young people.

Coach Modules

The club have utilised the National Coach Development Framework and the support of the District CoachForce Facilitators to upskill volunteers to be able to lead the programmes.

Coaching Resources

The club purchased copies of the Kiwi Squash and Squash Start coaching resources which outline a range of games and activities that kids find fun and are proven to develop their skills.

RESULTS

20

Young people involved in the programme. 12-15 participate each week (on average).

6

Courts being used.

4

Volunteer coaches overseeing the programme.

CONCLUSION

The Timaru Squash Club have been proactive in creating a new club culture that is supportive of juniors and youth, starting at the committee and ensuring that resources are shared. The first term was free to encourage players to have a go. Afterwards all young people were required to pay a subscription of \$100 for a junior membership. This covers the costs of coaching, lights, parent supervision during free court time and the administration of a junior (J grade) league to help progress the players along further.

Sport Canterbury Community Sport Advisor Linda Kenny said a key to the success was the marketing approach, "we targeted business house players and gave them a flyer about the programme for their kids and we used our club's personal connections to get into 2 nearby schools. This allowed us to put up posters and speak at assemblies to promote the offer."

The challenge for the club is to now continue growing and supporting their coaches and retaining their members.