

Northerns Squash Association

Chairman's report – 2021

1 Introduction

2021 was another roller coaster year for squash for all the wrong reasons. We started the year full of hope for a sense of normality but despite our best efforts, Covid-19 again had the last laugh in disrupting the season.

Eventually we can feel proud that we managed to complete 3 tournaments, play Blitz league and a modified Winter league, participate in the Growthpoint IPT, and see our players perform in the National championships.

2 Names of the Committee

Blaar Coetzee (Chairman), Cornelia Read (Treasurer), Gerda Dreyer (Administrator), Bronwen Martin, Angelo Shaik, and Derek van der Merwe continued to serve as the committee. Jacques Kruger joined at the last AGM. Blaine Verhage and Innes de Vries were not available for re-election.

3 Grass Roots development

Schools: Liz Mackenzie and Maryna Fourie continue to do squash development at primary and secondary schools in the province despite all the challenges of Covid-19 regulations.

4 Coaching and Refereeing

Coaching: The process to accredit coaches was put on hold since last year and had to be put on hold again. It will resume next year. No training courses were presented by Squash SA this year.

Refereeing: For most of the year Covid-19 limitations made it impossible to run M&R courses and subsequently the requirements of the by-laws in this regard were suspended for the season.

Previously identified players who are interested in taking their qualifications to a higher level will be approached again next year to expand the refereeing base in the province.

5 Elite Development

Due to Covid-19 limitations and the cancellation of the B-, C-, and D-sections of the IPT, no elite squad training took place. Individual player development continued as can be seen from the good results we achieved in the SA Nationals.

2021 Management Committee

Blaar Coetzee (Chairperson), Cornelia Read (Treasurer), Gerda Dreyer (Administrator), Jacques Kruger, Bronwen Martin, Angelo Shaik & Derek van der Merwe

6 **League/Tournaments**

Blitz league: CBC Men and Tuks Ladies won a very successful Blitz league at the start of the year, the same as in 2020. Uitsig won the Men's reserve league section. Blitz league could only start mid-March due to the late starting date of the Universities and was concluded on 31 March.

League: Northern's leagues started with 12 men's (3 fewer than 2020) and 3 women's leagues (1 less than in 2020). We could start early April and only 6 or 7 rounds were possible before the Covid-19 3rd wave forced us to stop in June.

League resumed in a shortened format like Blitz league early in September, with fewer teams in the leagues. The league was concluded in 7 rounds by 8 November. Promotion/relegation was again put on hold for the season.

Approximately 630 players participated which was 120 fewer than in 2020. Hopefully, these players will return to the courts once the Covid-19 pandemic is something of the past.

Tournaments: Northern's hosted 2 PSA Satellite tournaments at the start of the year to get the season going. The Northern's Closed was also hosted in May and with the help of NJSA, some of the matches were live-streamed.

IPT's: Northern's hosted the Growthpoint IPT A-sections in October 2020 after the financial year-end. Three matches a day were played on the all-glass court in Brooklyn mall and the remainder at PCC. The IPT was a huge success from both a squash playing and marketing point of view. Northern's sent teams to play in the men's C- and D-sections in Johannesburg as well.

In 2021 the whole IPT was scaled down to only A-sections and it was hosted in East London.

SA Nationals: In 2020 Northern's hosted the Growthpoint SA Nationals finals on the all-glass court in Brooklyn mall at the end of the season. Ruan Olivier lost in the final and Farrah Sterne lost in the quarterfinals.

The 2021 tournament needs special mention because of how well the Northern's players did. Luhann Groenewald won the bu17 section and Awande Malinga lost in the finals of the gu17 section. Both Ashton and Patrick Weir also played in the quarterfinals of the u17's.

Milnay Louw lost in the final of the ladies' section, Helena Coetzee lost in the quarterfinals, and Ruan Olivier lost in the semi-finals.

7 **Strategic Planning**

Northern's will keep to our overall strategic plan with a focus on constant improvement of the general level of play, good governance and staying competitive at the annual inter provincial tournament.

8 **Business Plan**

The Province is well run as shown by the unqualified audit reports that we again received, our annual financial statements being available within a short time after the financial year end,

AGM's being held as per the constitution and the general state of the financial affairs of the Association.

9 Lowlights

The disruption to the season because of Covid-19 was again problematic. The league was a stop-start affair.

10 Highlights

The hosting of the SA National Championships in October 2020 and the Growthpoint IPT shortly thereafter were both highlights. The performance of Northerns players at the 2021 Growthpoint SA Nationals and the popularity of the 2 PSA tournaments that we hosted, were too.

11 Conclusion

Northerns managed to play a lot of squash in a very disrupted year, which was a tribute to the resilience of our players, clubs, committees, and administrators. Our players continue to go from strength to strength.

With the foundation that we have laid, it is time to set our sights firmly on getting some more silverware in our trophy cabinet.

Blaar Coetzee

Chairman: NSA