



CASE STUDY:

INNOVATIVE WAYS OF CREATING A GREAT JUNIOR EXPERIENCE and CREATING REVENUE – INCLUDING OUTSIDE OF THE TRADITIONAL SQUASH CLUB OPERATION

SQUASH WAIKATO AND WAIHI SQUASH CLUB



SQUASH
NEW ZEALAND

OVERVIEW

Although in New Zealand we are lucky to have a fantastic infrastructure of clubs and facilities in most areas throughout the country, some communities unfortunately do not have easy access to a squash court. Luckily, transportable (micro and inflatable) courts exist - that are about 1/3 the size of a normal squash court - and this affords young people the opportunity to give squash a go. These can be erected in about 45 minutes on any flat surface such as car parks, gymnasiums or school halls.

Squash Waikato felt there was still a need to use their micro-court to support their Kiwi Squash programmes both as a promotional tool to generate interest in Kiwi Squash, and at the conclusion of the Small Nix programmes so students could apply what they had learned. So, Squash Waikato came up with a way to use their micro-court in a sustainable way so schools aren't reliant on having this to play squash.

CHALLENGES

Athlete Development

Young players need to develop fundamental skills to build a sound platform for learning squash skills. Although transportable courts are popular and fun, learning squash in these restricted environments can actually limit an athlete's development of skills.

School-Club Links

Engaging the micro-court with schools is great but how do you ensure this leads to the school taking up Kiwi Squash and more people linking to the club.

Cost

The courts require an initial investment to acquire and then there are the maintenance costs associated with setting / packing up each time and moving around the area.

SOLUTIONS

Micro-court

Squash Waikato hired the micro-court to the school for a week as a way of promoting the upcoming Kiwi Squash programmes. Teachers were taught how to work with the micro-court and coach the Small Nix programme at the same time.

Kiwi Squash

The Kiwi Squash programmes were adopted by the school, allowing for better skill development for students. The school used their own kit and were supported to run the programme independently following coach training.

The micro-court was used again in the school for the last two weeks of the Kiwi Squash Small Nix programme. Students rotated around the various activities in their school hall with the micro-court as one of the stations.

Hire Fees

Organisations that are interested can hire the transportable courts, which covers the transport and maintenance costs.

RESULTS

64

Young people taking part in Kiwi Squash for 8 weeks in a row (49 Small Nix and 15 Big Nix)

More

New junior club members (24), new teachers / parents (6) in business house, new adult members (2) and family memberships (2).

\$100

Charged for use of micro-court per week (if taking up Kiwi Squash programmes) - otherwise more expensive.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that transportable squash courts are a great way to allow kids taste playing squash on a court - especially if they do not have easy access to one within their community. However, there is a common misconception that these temporary facilities result in the development of skills and encourage ongoing participation.

Rather than relying solely on using these courts as a means to play squash, Squash Waikato have instead taken the approach that these be used at the end of each Kiwi Squash Small Nix programme so the kids get a taste of playing on a squash court - albeit modified. This means the Small Nix students spent weeks developing the important skills through the developmental age and stage appropriate Kiwi Squash Small Nix programme. As a result they were more likely to experience success and are in a better position to continue playing squash for life (which is evident from the number of new club members). Plus their learning was rewarded by getting to play on the transportable court with some fun activities in a station rotation. This overall approach has led to better participant - member conversions at the club, which was the reason for engaging with the school in the first place.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Waikino School is set in the rural Waikino township approximately 7km from Waihi. The school requested use of the micro-court to provide their students with an opportunity to try squash. Squash Waikato's Community Development Manager Glenda Knox hired the District's micro-court for the school to use for 2 weeks after implementing 8 weeks of the Kiwi Squash programmes – training school staff, club volunteers and supported the Waihi Squash Club to establish club programmes for students and teachers to take part in at the end.



WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE?

The Waihi Squash Club have:

- ✓ 3 new volunteer coaches plus 1 new club coach
- ✓ 6 coaches qualified under Module 5: Primary / Intermediate (Big Nix)
- ✓ 5 club coaches qualified under Extension Module 2: How to Coach
- ✓ 1 new school holiday programme with 9 kids attending
- ✓ Established new Kiwi Squash Small and Big Nix club programmes - 25 young people turned up for the first week (20 attend regularly)

What is coming up:

- ❑ A interschool teacher challenge
- ❑ An adult SquashStart programme (Social Slam)



The Waihi Squash Club plan to independently offer the Kiwi Squash programmes with more schools in the future.

This entire project involved Squash Waikato staff, the school Principal and teachers, Sport Waikato's Project Energise and District Coordinator and 4 club members from the Waihi Squash Club.

They discussed ways for each of them to promote and encourage links to the club for all ages, which turned a school visit into a community project that everyone is now a part of.



Squash Waikato and Waihi Squash Club are going to target the Waimata School in an attempt to deliver a similar experience for this community.