



CASE STUDY:

SUCCESSFULLY MERGING TWO CLUBS

WHANGAREI SQUASH CLUB



SQUASH
NEW ZEALAND

OVERVIEW

The United Matamata Squash Club resulted from the amalgamation of two clubs: the Short Street Club and the Sports Centre. Club Secretary Irene Lunn notes that both clubs needed each other. "The Sports Centre Squash Club had the facilities but was no longer operating properly due to a lack of members and funds to meet the increasing costs. On the other hand the Short Street Squash Club's numbers were continually growing but did not have the space with 2 courts to cater to the members' needs. There had been an investigation into adding an extra court at Short Street but this was found to be impractical. The only solution was to merge the 2 clubs to be located within the Sports Centre where there was plenty of space."

CHALLENGES

History

A number of members argued that the merger would not work and they did not want the history of the two clubs to disappear.

Ownership

The Sports Centre building was owned by the council and the new club would be leasing the building, which made some members nervous.

Cost & Space

The Sports Centre Squash Club was struggling to attract new members – making it difficult to run a squash club with increasing costs, whilst the Short Street Club was growing but only offered 2 courts – making it difficult to run a squash club with limited space.

SOLUTIONS

Investigation & Location

Research was done to help weigh up the pros and cons of each option to help make an informed decision not based on feelings. Of the two premises, the Sports Centre was selected as location for the new club facilities as it provided plenty of courts and a viewing area to satisfy members' needs.

Communication

A number of meetings were held for all members and the local council to attend and have their say.

RESULTS

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New club.



Members.



Community engagement.

CONCLUSION

Although the 2005 merger was a very long and tedious process, the United Matamata Squash Club has not only continued to operate, but has gone on to be highly successful, winning the Squash New Zealand Club of the Year award in 2010. The club continues to be proactive and effectively engage and communicate with the community today by approaching people for volunteering opportunities and distributing newsletters.

Mitigating the areas of concern was important and listening to and evaluating the memberships' feedback were key aspects to the process. If other clubs are looking to merge, the Club suggests that communication is critical to ensuring a success. "This helped to iron out any worries that any of the members had."