



SQUASH
EASTERN

JUNIOR ACADEMY

INFORMATION HANDBOOK

TRY IT. PLAY IT. LOVE IT.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE JUNIOR ACADEMY

In 2014 Squash Eastern acknowledged that the eastern region needed to develop a programme to help the junior players within our district.

Some districts in New Zealand have full-time coaches but, unfortunately, Squash Eastern does not employ a coach on a full-time basis. Since 2014, Squash Eastern has developed a pool of coaches to help encourage our junior players within the district.

Funding was applied for through Pub Charity and on 4th June 2014 the application was approved, and the Junior Academy received their first \$16,000. Since 2014, we have continued to apply for funding on an annual basis to ensure the continuity of the programme.

In order to formalise the Junior Academy, a sub-committee is formed annually, in line with the Squash Eastern year AGM. This year the sub-committee consists of Andrea Hewitt, Dino Michalakis and Daniel Newman. The sub-committee members are and will be a selection of people who are involved with juniors throughout the district and will look to oversee the Junior Academy.

The sub-committee identified eligible junior players and in so doing issued an invitation to all Eastern clubs asking for each club to put forward the names of any talented juniors that they felt would benefit from the programme. Those juniors were then divided into four categories:

- Elite Squad
- Emerging Squad
- Development Squad
- Future Stars

The sub-committee is responsible for:

- establishing a coaching plan
- criteria to be delivered by the coaches and players
- costings
- co-ordinating between the juniors, parents and Squash Eastern
- implementing and reviewing policies and procedures
- making recommendations on the format and structure to the Squash Eastern Board.

Since the inception of the Junior Academy, the number of juniors and coaches participating in the programme has increased. Apart from growing in numbers, the Junior Academy has grown in strength and has been recognised as being one of the most successful junior coaching programmes in New Zealand.

To achieve a shared vision, it is important that all parties involved in the development of the juniors are aware of the expectations and culture of the programme.

This information document will be updated annually and there will be consultation prior to issue to ensure that it reflects the wishes and commitment of all parties involved.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

These include:

- Squash Eastern
- Squash Eastern Junior Academy sub-committee
- Juniors
- Coaches
- Parents

SQUASH EASTERNS MISSION OF THE JUNIOR ACADEMY

“To create an Academy that supports and encourages growth and learning to lead juniors to become the best they can”



STRATEGIC PLAN AND KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE JUNIOR ACADEMY

- Identify junior squash players within the Eastern District with suitable potential and interest to develop them to a level where they are eligible for selection for the National teams
- Provide a training framework and pathway to support talent development
- Establish programmes to support junior players and coaches
- Develop and implement a long-term strategic plan for the development of juniors through to 2028
- Continue to source funding options

The Academy will provide a pathway for players and coaches to learn and develop in order to become the best nationally. National success is the pathway to international participation and provides incentives and development for both players and coaches.

FUNDING

The Academy is dependent on the funding received. To-date we have been successful for 9 years obtaining our funding from Pub Charity. However, we cannot assume that our applications to this organisation will always be successful, so the Academy is exploring other options. The academy will annually review funding and sponsorship.



PLAYER DEVELOPMENT AND SQUAD STRUCTURE

A squad structure capable of adequately preparing players to progress through a pathway to representing their sport on a national level is the main aim of this programme. It is important that Squash Eastern has a structure that can produce more juniors in this category. The structure and pathway of progression is equally as important in the development of coaches, as it is to the junior players.

Efforts will be made to provide opportunities for as many players as possible at lower/younger ages. As players increase in ability, they will then be able to move up to the next squad level. The squads are currently:

Future Stars – J Grade

To be eligible for this squad, the junior needs to show an interest in learning to play and developing their skills. They will be encouraged to play in the Junior 900 series or compete in tournaments to prove their ability and aim to improve their grading. This squad may also include emerging younger players who are exceptional for their age and are showing potential to develop towards the Junior A Development Squad.

Development Squad – Grades E2 to D2

- These players need to demonstrate an interest in learning further and developing their skills.
- They must compete in tournaments so their progress on iSquash can be monitored. The juniors in this squad will be promoted to the Emerging Elite Squad on reaching D1 level.

Emerging Squad – Grades D1 to C2

- The players in this squad should be established on the grading list and have demonstrated that they are keen to further improve their skills.
- They need to demonstrate that they are prepared to put the time and effort into the sport both from a skill and a fitness perspective.
- To broaden their exposure to competitive play, it would be expected that players at this level are competing for their club in the districts interclub league. It would be further expected for them to continue entering tournaments in order to progress up the grading list.



Elite Squad – C1 and above

- At this level, it is expected these juniors will be participating in regular coaching, tournaments and interclub.
- These players are expected to be good role models for all of the other juniors below them, throughout the district. They are expected to act as role models on and off the court. We see these juniors representing the best of squash as they are the pinnacle of their sport in the region.
- The Academy expects these players to represent Eastern Squash proudly as the best we have to offer on and off the court, home and away travelling.
- The Academy expects these junior players to have a high level of commitment to squash. The academy expects their representation in Eastern colours at all of the major junior fixtures of the year. These fixtures are any representative tournaments, challenges and training camps. Repeated failure to represent at these fixtures will have the Junior removed from the Academy forfeiting his or her benefits of the Academy.
- This level will include those players who are C1 or higher. They will be working to achieve (or have achieved) selection for the National Development Squad or Junior National Team Status.

Refer to our Policies and Procedures Document (Appendix A) to learn more about the criteria and selection for each squad.

A full list of juniors and their assigned squads is attached (Appendix B) and this is reviewed on a regular basis and changes made as juniors progress up the grades or leave the Academy programme.

COACHES

We have a pool of dedicated coaches. The Academy aims to provide support and opportunities for new and existing coaches. Good coaches are always in demand and at a premium and we are continually looking to recruit new coaches into this coaching arena.

We are striving to create a coaching network of qualified and experienced coaches who have the ability to deliver quality programmes to our juniors at all levels.

To learn more about the recruitment, development and support of coaches, including a list of current Junior Academy coaches, please refer to our Policies and Procedures for Coaches (Appendix C).

PARENTS

The success of the Academy is also reliant on the support of parents. The commitment expected and required from the juniors' places pressure on their families, especially financially, and with the time required by the juniors away from home activities.

Parents spend hours court-side and running their children to and from clubs for matches and training.

Because of this, we ask the support of the parents to ensure that their child is fully committed to the junior programme and that they understand the expectation and commitment from both parent and child to ensure that they retain their place in the Junior Academy.

COST OF COACHING

The coach of a junior player, who has been identified and accepted into one of the four 'Junior Categories', is able to access funding Eastern Squash have received in accepted grants to coach that specific junior player.

The funding we received is used to pay part of the coaching costs for each junior. Our current policy is that for each session the funding we receive goes towards 50% of the cost with the parent of the junior paying the remaining 50%.

Once the funding has been used, parents might be expected to meet the full cost of coaching until the next funding is granted.

The cost of coaching is reviewed annually and for further information refer to our Policies and Procedures Document (Appendix A).

SUMMARY

The sub-committee is provided with information from which they regularly review those members of the Academy. These include:

- Tournament Results
- Grading points progress
- National Statistics

APPENDICES

- Appendix A - Code of Conduct
- Appendix B - Junior Academy Squads
- Appendix C - Child Protection Policy