

SQUASH STARS SHOWCASE:

Cambridge Racquets Club



Format:

Term-based: Groups for a range of abilities. Grouping players was a dynamic process, requiring flexibility and constant adjustment due to varying attendance each week.

Sessions: Each day had three afternoon sessions lasting 45-60 minutes each (2.5 hours total).

Organisation: One paid coach and five volunteers were involved each week. The organiser spent about an hour outside of session time preparing and sharing session plans with the team. The coach stayed on the same court, with drills progressing from beginner to advanced as the evening went on.

Activities: Included a mix of Squash Stars drills, favourite exercises, and Big Nix resources.

Participants:

Term 2: 65 participants (34 new players). Challenging and chaotic.

Term 3: 45 participants (2 new, rest returning or existing members). Easier to manage.

Organisers: Involvement included one paid coach and five volunteers, with the organiser dedicating additional planning time.

Volunteers: Played a crucial role in supporting delivery and managing groups.

Promotion:

Primarily through a Facebook post and posters distributed to local schools. Simple but effective approach, leveraging community networks to attract new participants.

Why It Works:

Volunteer Support: Having a strong volunteer team made the programme less stressful and more enjoyable for everyone involved.

Good Organisation: Stations all set up with equipment before start of the session so volunteers just needed to arrive and start running their court.

Flexible Grouping: The ability to adapt groups on the fly was essential, given fluctuating attendance.

Engagement: Lollies (fruit bursts) were given out at the end of each session, adding a fun, memorable touch.

Focus on Play: Emphasis was placed on actual game play, as children were most interested in playing squash rather than just drills.

Retention and Follow-up: Due to high interest, the club extended into Term 4, shifting to a more social club night format with a mix of coaching and games. This targeted those genuinely interested in squash, leading to new sign-ups and future memberships, especially for Friday night interclub.

Advice for Other Clubs: More volunteers make a big difference, and keeping sessions fun and focused on play helps with retention.

