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## Cole Harbour Exits Halifax Squash League

By Judy Myrden

Organizers of the 40-year-old **Halifax Squash League** (HSL) plan to carry on the upcoming inter club season despite the withdrawal of **Cole Harbour Place** (CHP).

**Saint Mary's University SMUfit** and **Dalhousie University** will proceed with the Wednesday night league at the two facilities starting October 9.

For the past four decades the participating facilities - which originally were seven and has dwindled to two - exchanged court times for their members on a reciprocal basis on Wednesday nights at no cost.

This summer the three facilities reviewed their participation in HSL, including court rentals costs, and wanted to charge the league an estimated combined \$20,000, which could have caused the league to default, **Phil Jourdeuil**, HSL Convenor, told **In The Nick**.

According to people familiar with the negotiations, CHP wanted to charge court rental fees for all outside user groups including the HSL.

HSL convenors and **Squash Nova Scotia** Board of Directors met first with SMU, and then with Dal to see if a compromise could be reached, said Jourdeuil.

Eventually both allowed HSL to continue to access courts under a new contract at a nominal fee of \$500 per season, as long as the league players were members of one of the participating facilities.

On September 9, at a CHP Board of Directors meeting they rejected these terms for the 2024-2025 squash league season, said Jourdeuil.

**Jen Heddon**, CHP General Manager, declined to comment on the CHP board's decision. Jourdeuil, also a member of CHP, said the league will continue to pursue options to bring back CHP into the squash league in the coming year.

He indicated several CHP squash players have moved their memberships to other facilities so they can play in the league with other clubs.

**Lindsay McFarlane**, Fitness Co-Ordinator for Saint Mary's University, said the university was concerned at first about HSL's undocumented and free access to the facility.

"SMU wants to make sure that HSL access aligned with facility processes without collapsing the league. The new contract and its price meet these goals," McFarlane said in an email to ITN.

The league currently has 60 members participating - 30 players from SMU and Dal each - along with four spares.

### Upcoming Events

Oct 11-13: [PEI Rust Remover](#)

Oct 18-20: [KCSC Junior Valley Tournament](#)

Oct 24-27: [Black Knight SMUfit Tournament](#)

Nov 15-16: [NS Junior Open](#)

Nov 22-24: [KCSC 902SquashEd Tournament For Education](#)

## Kings County Rust Remover

Kings County Squash Club (KCSC) hosted their annual **Rust Remover Tournament** September 27-29. Nine divisions with 74 players in the draws from **PEI, Ontario** and across **Nova Scotia**, including 16 juniors from KCSC competing in their first tournament.



*Victor Onyebuchi & Kevin Cosgrove play their Sunday Division 3 Consolation Finals match  
Photo by Cordale Hann*

## Nova Scotia Junior Rust Remover

The **Nova Scotia Junior Rust Remover** was hosted by **Squash Nova Scotia** president **Leah Boody** at **SMUfit** squash courts on Sept. 24. There were 23 juniors who participated from the **HRM** and the **Valley** playing a variety of matches, cut-throat, and 3-corner squash to prepare for the upcoming season. While Leah organized the event it would not have been possible without the help of squash players **Garreth Beckles**, **Victor Onyebuchi**, and **Jack Comeau** who kept the kids going on and off the courts.



*Alemnesh Sanche-Spencer, of Gaspereau, hits with Garreth Beckles at the rust remover.*



*Ava Wiseman digs into her backhand to hit with Victor Onyebuchi.  
Photos by Heather MacElwee*

## Eye on the Ball: A Personal Tale of Squash Safety

By Dr. Stephen Workman

About a decade ago, I was playing squash against **Bill Freedman**, a legendary **Dalhousie University** player who had dominated the court for decades.

Freedman, a biology professor at Dal, humorously offered an 'A' to any student who could win a best-of-five match against him.

Despite his heavyset frame, he was incredibly powerful with great hands; if he reached the ball, he would likely make a winning shot, often with a tricky trickle boast. Any shot he couldn't reach was usually called a let since he knew what shot I was aiming for before I did.

As always, I was losing the game and growing increasingly frustrated when I hit a forehand crosscourt drive—down the middle, unfortunately. Bill, reading me as usual, had positioned himself for a backhand drive winner, only to find the ball appearing on his forehand side.

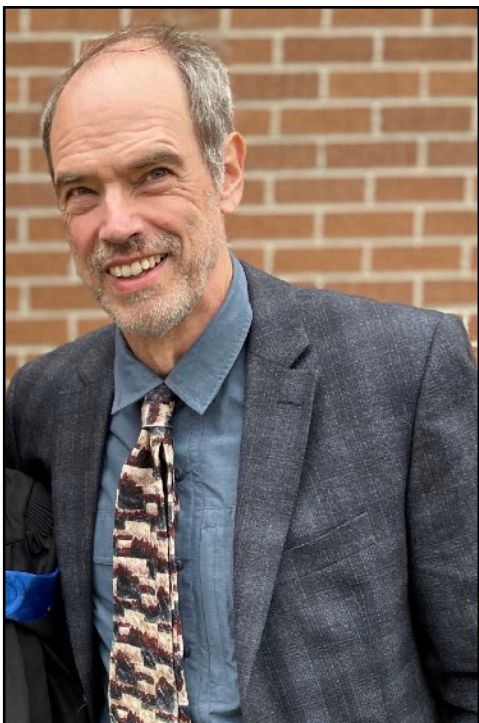
With no time to reset, he just swung his racquet across his body, intending to strike the ball with the backhand surface.

He caught the frame instead, and I knew this because I was looking right at the ball as it traveled directly at my left eye. I had time to blink and tip my head back slightly.

Fortunately, the ball was not travelling too fast. The ball struck my lower orbit, leaving a small bruise, then deflected upwards, shoving my eyeball back before ricocheting off the top of my orbit, leaving another bruise.

"Oh crap," I thought. I saw stars for a moment and stopped playing, but fortunately, I suffered no injury to any part of my eye beyond the orbit.

My safety glasses? They were hanging in the rafters in my basement. I had looked for them before I left.



When I got home I called the ophthalmology resident on call to review the story —membership has its privileges!— and I distinctly remember their response, besides "You'll be fine."

"We get a couple of calls like this per week." Per week? "Squash?" I asked. "Squash, racquetball, badminton, but yeah, a lot of squash." Yikes! Sometimes I don't want to wear eye protection, but then I recall seeing the ball on a collision course with my eye and changed my mind.

Squash balls, as some of you may have noticed, can go really, really fast, and they're nearly the same size as the human eye. So, um, yeah, with the right trajectory, they can become interchangeable.

I mentioned to **Judy (Myrden, of course)** that I wanted to cover eye safety in squash, and she agreed then told me about a lost eye injury she knew of. Being squeamish, I avoided the details, but you get the point. So here's some cheap advice and some thoughts on eye safety:

1. Buy at least two pairs of racquet-specific eye protection as

one pair can easily go missing. Opt for polycarbonate lenses and hinges that are over the temple, not the eye. According to google, protective eyewear reduces or even eliminates serious eye injury. Keep the glasses in the pouch in the box. I don't but you should.

2. Sorry, but regular glasses can turn into shrapnel. Custom prescription eyewear is worth it. (Anything that improves your game is a good investment anyway!)
3. Invest in some high-quality headbands to reduce steaming and drips. Anti-fog sprays are available.
4. Travel with an extra set in case your opponent needs a pair.
5. Watching your opponent hit the ball can provide a lot of useful information. Wearing safety eyewear makes this a more palatable option.

It may be that really good players do not need safety eyewear to the same extent....then again, the top 5% of players would only be expected to generate, say, 5% of injuries? Maybe less if experience truly mitigates risk.

Squash is a fantastic game, and playing twice a week for over 30 years-or longer- means the risk of an eye injury adds up.

Vision is important. As **Yogi Berra** noted, 'You can see a lot by looking.' In my opinion, the minute loss in acuity from protective eyewear is a tiny price to pay.

Have fun, Play safe, Cover up.

*Editor's Note: **Dr. Stephen Workman** is a Halifax-based physician and father of five and has been pounding squash courts for forty years and only hit in the eye once. Adele and Emmett (2023 Canada Winter Games NS Squash Team) are his crowning squash achievements.*

## Perfect Match

SMUfit squash player and referee **Elvira Mitraka** tied the knot with longtime boyfriend, **Cody LeBlanc**, on July 19, 2024 at a ceremony at Sir Sandford Fleming Park, in Halifax.

*Photo by Kate Hayter*





# Mike Cook Steps Up Again For Squash In Nova Scotia

By Judy Myrden



*Photo by Jeff Cooke*

**Mike Cook** brings an acute sense of intentionality to everything he does - from playing squash, being an architect, and now to laying out Nova Scotia's monthly squash newsletter, **In The Nick (ITN)**.

The **SMUfit** squash player is taking over from former ITN Layout Editor **John Arnold**, who recently moved to Vancouver (see September issue of ITN), and the October issue is his first publication.

"Squash has been an incredible boon to my life the last 13 years," Cook told ITN.

The 38-year-old brings years of experience playing squash, along with a keen eye to detail and design as an architect in the new volunteer position.

Born in **Calgary, Alberta**, his family moved back to **St. John's, Newfoundland** when he was four-years-old.

"I consider myself a Newfoundlander at heart, all of my family are Newfoundlanders."

He attended **Memorial University** in St. John's, and **University of Manitoba** for a year each before finally settling at **Dalhousie University** in **Halifax** in 2006, where he completed a **Bachelor of Environmental Design Studies** and **Masters of Architecture** in August 2011.

He has worked in St. John's, Halifax, and **Los Angeles**. In 2017, he moved back to Halifax after a brief stint in St. John's and he now calls Halifax home.

Cook is a regular player at tournaments in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. He has also played in the **Halifax Squash League** as a member from Dalhousie University and then as a member of SMUfit.

He has played in the Premier Squash League since 2018.

The fulfillment extends beyond the courts - he ran the Halifax Squash League from 2012 to the end of 2015 and volunteered as Team Captain for several years.

He has volunteered at the desk during tournaments and while not a Black Shirt he has jumped in to volunteer as a referee at most tournaments for many years.

Before playing squash, Cook was an avid tennis player and coach throughout his teens and early 20's, but quickly fell in love with playing squash.

"After graduating and watching my closest friends from university move out of the province to pursue careers elsewhere, I needed a new community and a way to stay active," he said. "Squash has gifted me that, and more. I'm in better shape now at 38 than I was at 25, and I have an active and fulfilling social life, surrounded by friends that I consider as close as family."

As for his best advice in playing squash: "Don't go short too early in a rally. Establish consistent and straight length in the rally and be ready to pounce on any loose or short balls."

## SMUfit Ladies Monday Night Returns

A group of 12 ladies recently attended the first session of the **Monday Ladies Night Squash** at **SMUfit**. It is a group of women of all ages and skill levels who meet on Monday nights, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. September through April. Registration for Ladies Night for SMUfit Plus Members can be completed at the following link: <https://athletics.smu.ca/Program/GetProgramDetails?courseId=45cc7499-8d19-4e0b-b4c4-abf62c0169cb>



*Photo by Judy Myrden*

# Ask The Ref!

## A Primer on the Rules Regarding Time Management in a Squash Match

By Lee Kirby, Abdo Abdallah, Zal Davar, Elvira Mitraka, Thomas Hori

**Pre-Match** - Smooth tournament flow requires players knowing when their match is scheduled and being warmed up and ready to play before match time.

**Warm-up** - 4 minutes of total time with 2 minutes on each side and “Half-time” being called out at the 2 minute mark, and “Time” at 4 minutes.

**Intervals** - Between games and between the end of warmup and start of the game, 90 seconds is allotted with a “15 Seconds” reminder. If a player wishes to hit the ball between games, this should be done before the 90 seconds expire. The referee has the discretion to permit warming up the ball if necessary. It is the player’s responsibility to be back on court ready to play on time. The referee has the discretion to caution, or if necessary, penalize late returning.

**Serve** - There is no specific time allotted for a player to serve, it is expected to keep the play continuous, while allowing the opponent reasonable time to be ready to receive the serve.

**Equipment** - In the case of broken strings/racquets, 90 seconds are permitted to change the racquet. A referee is required to confirm the break and then allow the player to walk off court to complete the switch. No other actions are allowed (e.g drinking water).

**Player Delays** - The referee ensures continuous play with reminders to the players, and in certain cases the use of Code of Conduct violations is required.

**Illness** - No allotted time for illness. Players must continue playing, or concede the game.

**Injury** - The referee first determines if the injury is Self-inflicted, Contributed, Opponent Inflicted, or Deliberate. The allotted time interval will follow this determination. Timing starts once the injury is categorized and possible treatment required takes place. Deliberate injury is dealt with through conduct provisions.

### Injuries without bleeding

**Self-inflicted:** 3 minutes to recover.

**Contributed** (Involves both players in an accidental incident): Injured player gets 15 minutes, followed by another 15 minutes at the discretion of the referee.

**Opponent Inflicted** (Two sections):

1. Accidental: Injured player gets 15 minutes. If unable to recover, the match is awarded to the injured player.
2. Opponent’s deliberate or dangerous play. If injured player requires time, match is awarded to injured player.

Each month our local **Black Shirt Ref Crew** responds to questions from the readership about rules, specific situations, and officiating decisions in general.

Through this column, players will build knowledge into both their games and their own officiating skills.

Please submit your squash officiating questions by email to [inthenick@nssquash.ca](mailto:inthenick@nssquash.ca).



**Bleeding:** Three categories of bleeding

**Self-inflicted:** 5 Minutes to control the flow. No further time is allowed if there is a re-bleed of the same injury.

**Contributed:** Reasonable time to control the bleed. Additional reasonable time is allowed if there is re-bleed, with no actions taken by the injured player. If a re-bleed takes place for the actions of the injured player, the game needs to be conceded.

**Opponent Inflicted:**

1. If accidental, injured player gets reasonable time, if bleeding is not controlled or player is unable to continue, match is awarded to the injured player.
2. If deliberate, match is awarded to the injured player.

Players should review Section 14 of the 2024 World Squash Singles Rules for complete explanation of the rules for injury and bleeding.

**SMUfit Rust Remover Calcutta**

The annual **SMUfit Rust Remover Calcutta** was hosted at **SMUFit** on September 21. The event organized by **Dave Malyk** had over 20 entrants.



*Division winners from left to right: Maegan Burke, Jason White, and Cordale Hann.*



*Participants included from left to right: Angelo Yiannou, Dan Hasselman and Sageev Oore. (Photos by Heather MacElwee)*

Contributions to **In The Nick** are welcome! Send in your letters, stories, or feedback to us here: [InTheNick@nssquash.ca](mailto:InTheNick@nssquash.ca)

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