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## Squash Nova Scotia Rolls Out New Program

By Judy Myrden

One thing about **Angela Newhook**, she's used to dealing with challenges.

And the next challenge for the 53-year-old is picking up how to play squash - from a wheelchair.

The timing is right for Newhook, who has just completed the winter curling season at the Sackville Sport Stadium.

She's participating in a new **Squash Nova Scotia** pilot program introducing squash to people with disabilities at **Cole Harbour Place** in **Dartmouth**.

Newhook uses a wheelchair and is living with spina bifida.

"A friend saw this (squash program) mentioned on Facebook, so I thought I'd give it a shot. I'm not into high contact sports anymore so this seemed just right," Newhook told **In The Nick**.



*Angela Newhook is trying out a new sport: Wheelchair Squash 57 with squash coaches Garreth Beckles and Cindy Wheeler helping her learn the fundamentals of the game at Cole Harbour Place. Photo by Adam Morris.*

### Upcoming Events

May 10: [Squash N.S. Annual General Meeting](#)

May 31-Jun 2: [KCSC Tournament for Education](#)

Jun 20-22: Squash Canada Annual General Meeting

The racquet sport, played on a regular singles court which has four walls, suits Newhook, a longtime employee at the Portland Street Superstore, because it's a "fast paced aerobic workout."

"I was wanting something to occupy my time once I was done playing wheelchair curling for the season," she said.

The six-week program, which started in April, is one of two new inclusive squash initiatives funded by the federal government in Nova Scotia. The other program "new to Canada" is focusing on the Muslim community.

Newhook has strong upper arm strength but finds it challenging to move the wheelchair quick enough to return the squash ball.

"I do like the sport so far. It's a lot trickier to get the hang of than I thought... It's a

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good workout for the arms,” she said.

She says her hand eye coordination isn't very good and still finds the ball and racquet too small.

Wheelchair squash is a version of the sport that has been adapted for wheelchair users through Squash 57: a racquet sport in which players use a larger head racquet and a larger (57mm), bouncier ball than in squash.

The program also offers a learning experience for coaches, administrators, and sport organizations.

**Cindy Wheeler**, a squash player and also a wheelchair tennis coach, is helping with the program, along with **Garreth Beckles**, a top junior squash player and coach.

“I love coaching para sport because these athletes inspire me in their positive approach to life,” Wheeler said.

“To see the grit and determination they have to get on court in a sport chair and work so hard to do things that come easy to able-bodied athletes is truly incredible. It gives you perspective and makes you do whatever you can to help.”

Squash Nova Scotia received \$33,800 from the federal government in January for the two programs.

The wheelchair program costs \$26,000, with the bulk of the money - \$23,000 - going towards the purchase of four sport wheelchairs. The rest for court rental fees, snacks, drinks, coach fees, and equipment, including racquets, balls, and goggles.

“We are pleased that the pilot will provide an opportunity for folks with diverse abilities to play Squash 57, the first opportunity of its kind in Nova Scotia. It is very exciting for us to finally branch into the para sport world,” said **Adam Morris**, Sport Nova Scotia representative.

## Welcoming New Community Squash Coaches

Ten new community instructors attended a one-day workshop April 6 at Cole Harbour Place, as part of a new Squash Canada Coaching program for community coaches.

From left to right in the photo below: Learning facilitator Josh Rudolph, Ashley Cullis, David Hansen, Julia Dugandzic, Garreth Beckles, Emily Byron, Fernando Beckles, Jeff Cullis, Cindy Wheeler, David Westwood, Julia Pelton, and Learning Facilitator Chris Lien. Photo by Ashley Cullis.



## Nova Scotian Coaches Make The International Cut

By Judy Myrden

Provincial squash coaches **Janet MacLeod** and **Josh Rudolph** have been selected as Team Canada coaches for a cross-border junior tournament in August.

“I am very pleased to be selected to coach at the **Battle of the Border**... I am really looking forward to the competition and having a shared experience with Josh,” MacLeod told **In The Nick** in an email.

**Squash Canada** recently announced the coach selections for seven upcoming international events.

Rudolph has been involved in squash for over 20 years as a successful player. He heads the junior squash programming at SMUfit in Halifax and was the head coach of the **2023 Canada Games Winter Squash Team** for Nova Scotia.

This will be MacLeod’s fourth time coaching some of Canada’s top juniors at the Battle of the Border against the United States.

Last year she coached the girls U15 team in **Philadelphia** at the **Arlene Spectre Centre**. This year the event moves back to Canada to its place of origin at **The Club at White Oaks** in **Niagara-On-The-Lake, Ont.** from Aug. 1 to Aug. 4.

Each of the Canadian and U.S. teams will comprise four males and four females in each of the U13, U15 and U17 age categories. Therefore Canada will have six coaches - one per team, said MacLeod of **Kentville**.

Last year the U.S. team came out on top, winning 20 of the 24 matches.

“We are lucky in Canada to have so many qualified and experienced coaches, and this year we were thrilled with the quality and quantity of applications from the Canadian coaching community,” said **Samantha Cornett**, Squash Canada’s Manager of Athlete Development in a news release.



*Josh Rudolph giving instruction to Marnie Bishop at the 2023 Canada Games. Photo by Len Wagg.*



*Janet MacLeod coaching Madison Laine at the Battle of the Border 2017. Photo by Cindy Sachvie.*

MacLeod has coached internationally at a number of other events, including the **World Junior Championships** in the **Netherlands** in 2015, **New Zealand** in 2017 and **Malaysia** in 2019. She also coached at the **Pan American Junior Championships** in **Brazil** in 2018 and Canada the following year.

“As a lifelong learner in a sport I am deeply passionate about, my coaching roles continue to evolve at all levels. The competitions are not only great for learning for players and coaches, but are also a wonderful way to make connections with people from all over the world,” she said.

Rudolph was unavailable for comment.

## Junior Valley Bloom Is A Family Affair

By Monique Guilderson

My son, **Leo**, and I drove from Halifax to the **Kings County Squash Club** on Sat. April 27 in **Kentville** for the **Junior Valley Bloom** junior tournament.

Leo participated with 34 other junior players across five divisions.

There was strong competition among the older players in Division 1 and Division 2. For younger juniors the goal was to simply learn and have fun.

We immediately felt like one of the many families who call the club home.

Speaking with provincial coach **Janet MacLeod**, she said the club has three very active junior programs, with over 50 members supported by volunteers and family members, making squash accessible to all kids.

Attending practices and tournaments requires dedication from juniors and their families.

Squash Dad, **Campbell Webster**, drove from **Prince Edward Island** to Kentville, to ensure his son **Louis** could play in the tournament. This was the last chance juniors could compete before the season ran out.

Webster and his son have travelled to every Atlantic Canadian tournament this season.

Many juniors come from a long lineage of squash players.

Kentville club president **Greg Myers**' children are the third generation of his family to play squash. Member **Rick Taylor** said, "His whole family plays squash together," a story I heard several times throughout the day.

Leo's assessment of the day? "It was fun." Perfect answer.



*Tournament organizer Greg Myers with Mixed Div. 1 winner Andrew Klein, right, and runner up Dorian Palmer, left. Photo by Janet MacLeod.*



*Leo Guilderson plays in Kentville against Sophia Myers. Photo by Monique Guilderson.*

### 2024 Atlantic Championships

More than 20 Nova Scotians competed in the annual Atlantic Championships held in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island from April 4-7. The tournament featured two venues where 120 competitors battled from across all four Atlantic provinces.

Read the [full write-up](#) by tournament organizer Andrew Avery on the Squash Canada website.

# Ask The Ref!

By Zal Davar & the Black Shirt Ref Crew

## Question:

“What skills does a good referee require?”

## Answer:

Four important skills come to mind.

### Knowledge.

A good referee should have technical knowledge of the game, along with knowing the [rules of the game](#) and how they apply to each situation.

### Communication/Presentation.

The ability to clearly and concisely explain decisions, which comes with knowledge and experience.

Also, a calm demeanour and confident presentation, which comes with experience. This helps to assure players that you are addressing their concerns in a deliberate and fair manner.

### Concentration.

The ability to concentrate and not be distracted is essential. Some rallies and matches can be long, so the ability to concentrate during every rally is a necessary skill for a referee.

A key aspect of concentration is the ability to watch **purposefully**:

- Watching the movement of the striker and non-striker; especially whether they are making the effort to clear, or get to the ball.
- Observing the positions of the players and the ball, *at the time a let is requested*.
- Recognizing how these relative positions determine a winner versus a good shot.
- And how the relative positions differentiate between a **Let**, **Stroke**, and **No Let**.

### Consistency.

Interference within the confines of the court varies from match to match. While experienced referees often have narrower parameters for decisions on interference, all referees should strive for consistency of calls for similar situations in any given match. If players recognize that decisions are consistent there will be less contentiousness.

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).

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