In The Nick

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Houston Government Slashes Squash Grant By 20%

By Judy Myrden

Squash Nova Scotia (SNS) President **Ryan Breetzke** calls the Houston government's 20% cut to the non-profit's provincial grant regrettable.

"Although we understand the challenging financial times for all institutions and individuals too, the cuts we were recently informed of are disappointing," Breetzke told **In The Nick** in an e-mail.

SNS's core funding - currently $10,000 for 2025-2026 - will be reduced by 20%, resulting in an annual allocation of $8,000 beginning in 2026-2027.

Upcoming Events

Apr 09-12: 2026 Atlantic Championships

May 21-24: KCSC Tournament for Education

Although the Progressive Conservative government of **Tim Houston** later reversed some cuts, discretionary funds were not restored meaning the squash reduction stands.

"As we have only found out it we haven't yet fully analyzed it, but most likely this could impact some of our programs and support the Junior (squash) Team that is currently training for next year's Canada (Winter) games," he added.



Junior Squash Players: Ava Wiseman digs into her backhand to hit with
Victor Onyebuchi. (Photo by Heather MacElwee)

Breetzke is hoping to make up the shortfall in future funding from the government.

He said the SNS board is preparing for its three-year provincial review in April which will determine SNS's three year funding cycle starting in 2027.

"We are hopeful that the hard work the board has done in developing the SNS

2024-2027 Strategic Plan, and aligning it to the provincial requirements will result in additional funding being accessed in the next cycle, and this could offset the cut backs," said Breetzke.

On February 23, the provincial government announced it was slashing $130.4 million in discretionary grants impacting more than 280 programs across the province, including SNS.



Bill Greenlaw: Executive Director Communities, Sport and Recreation (Photo by The Coaching Association of Canada)

"We have also made the difficult decision to reduce discretionary grants," wrote **Bill Greenlaw**, **Executive Director Communities, Sport** and **Recreation**, in a letter to **Veronica Todd, Sport Nova Scotia**'s squash representative on February 24.

Greenlaw acknowledged in his one-page letter, "this may create challenges for your organization", and thanked her for her "hard work" and the "difference Squash Nova Scotia makes in improving the lives of Nova Scotians."

The grants cuts will affect community organizations across the province, including programs related to the arts, sports, health, seniors, youth and more.

The PC government tabled a budget that cut another $300 million that included reducing the size of government and operating costs starting in fiscal year 2026-2027.

The provincial government said it reached this decision based on the past five years, the government has made "significant investments in program and services to improve healthcare, strengthen our communities and support those who need it most."

2026 Nova Scotia Squash Open Owned By Juniors

By Judy Myrden

Juniors dominated the **2026 Nova Scotia Squash Open** winning five of the 10 divisions.

The event hosted by **Squash Nova Scotia** and partnered with **ReCar**, saw top junior players from **Nova Scotia**, **Prince Edward Island**, and **New Brunswick** compete with success in the event held March 26-29 in Halifax at the SMUfit courts.

A large contingent of 17 juniors came from the Annapolis Valley to compete in the four-day tournament, and for many it was their first tournament.

There were 10 players from the 902SquashEd program, a non-profit which aims to empower students of African descent through the sport of squash based in the Valley, and seven from the squash academy at the **King's County Squash Club**.



For many of the902SquashEd squash players it was their first time playing in the Nova Scotia Squash Open tournament. From left to right; Ipoola Ogunbodede, Jeremy Grossmith, Jade Ramsaran, and Devonte Bremner. (Photo by Judy Myrden).



Ava Wiseman, of Wolfville, won the Women's Division 3 Championship. (Photo by Judy Myrden).

Squash Coach **Janet MacLeod** said juniors in these two programs play at least twice a week and host six tournaments a year.

"It's all very encouraging, and we make it fun with playing, music and food," she told **In The Nick**.

Valley junior **Sophia Myers**, of **Kentville**, captured the Women's Division 2 title, and **Ava Wiseman**, of **Wolfville**, won the Women's Division 3 championship.

The four-day tournament kept organizers busy with 111 players, playing across 10 divisions, with 190 matches.

Full tournament results can be found on Club Locker.



Calcutta finalists from left to right David Westwood (winner), Alexander Chin, Evan Smith. (Photo by Maegan Burke)

Emily Byron Memorial Calcutta

Dalhousie Squash Club hosted a friendly Calcutta tournament in honour of Emily Byron. 28 Dalhousie Squash club members participated in the event. The event raised $235 which went towards a donation to the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia.

SMUfit Ladies Night Clinic

SMUfit Ladies Monday Night Squash held a special event on Monday March 23. SMU president Michael Khan, a former professional squash player and coach, and SMUfit Personal Trainer Sonja Esber, joined the group of 26 players, for coaching and instruction. (Photo by Victor Onyebuchi).



Juniors Pop at Junior Valley Bloom Tournament

By Judy Myrden

Luke Boody, of **Halifax**, returned to the **King's County Squash Club** in **Kentville** for the **Junior Valley Bloom Tournament** held March 6-8 with 26 participants playing in four divisions.

Boody, who plays out of **SMUfit**, was on a mission after losing in the finals of the tournament last year.

This year Boody took the Junior Division 1 title in a round robin of five players. He won his first two matches and then faced **Andrew Klein**, of **Kentville**, in a tough match.

Boody was down two games and rallied back to win the match in game five 13-11. And also won his fourth and final match clinching the championship.



Andrew Klein, of Wolfville, on the left battles it out against Kayin Burrell, of New Minas, in the Junior 1 Division at the Junior Valley Bloom Tournament in Kentville. (Photo by Janet MacLeod).



Ava Wiseman, on the left, and Sophia Myers, competed in the Junior Valley Bloom Tournament held March 6-8. (Photo by Janet MacLeod.)

Junior Division 1 runner-up was **Jeremi LeBlanc**, of **Caanan**, and **Cohen Riley- Zwicker** placed third.

Junior Division 2 first place winner was **Alemnesh Sanche-Spencer**, **Hudson Kinney** came in second, and **Rylan Hale** in third.

Junior Division 3 saw strong competition amongst the five players with **JaMarcus Bernard** taking the championship title, and **Ava Wiseman** securing second place, and **Devonte Bremner** in third.

In Division 4, **Jermaine Layne** won all his five matches - never dropping a game - to capture the championship. **Kelton Hearn** came in second, and **Cameron Kenny** came in third place. This was Layne's second tournament, and his second division win this year.

Earlier in the year Layne played in the Valley Winter Thaw winning Division 4 title.

Nova Scotia Juniors Compete at 2026 Prairie Jesters Junior Open Squash Championship

By Judy Myrden

Two of Nova Scotia's top ranked juniors squash players made it to the finals at the **Prairie Jesters Junior Open National Junior Gold Circuit Squash Championship** held February 27- March 1 at the **Winnipeg Winter Club**.

In a five game thriller, **Adele Workman**, of **Halifax**, played in her maiden Gold-level junior final.

She easily won her first three matches, only dropping one game in the Girls Under 15 Division, advancing to the finals.

In the final match against **Portia Ireland**, of **Winnipeg**, Workman was feeling the nerves early on in the match, losing the first game 11-9.



Four Nova Scotia junior squash players travelled to Winnipeg to play in the Prairie Jesters Junior Open Squash Tournament. From left to right; Jack Comeau, Henry Quach, Jeremi LeBlanc and Adele Workman. (Photo by Josh Rudolph).

Then Workman came back and won the next two games 11-9, 12-10. Ireland won the fourth game 12-10, and then the match in the fifth game 11-9.

Jack Comeau, of Halifax, competing in the Under 17 Boys got a bye in the first round, and then easily won his next two matches 3-0,3-0.

He advanced to the semi-finals winning 11-3,11-9,11-8 against **Winston Hooker-Ridgen**, also of Winnipeg. In the finals Comeau went down in defeat against Ivo Thiessen, of Winnipeg, 3-0.

Jeremi LeBlanc, of **Caanan**, lost his first match and then battled it out in his second match against a higher ranking player **Romain Lapointe-Masson**.

LeBlanc won the first two games (12-10, 16-14) and then Lapoint-Masson rallied back to win the next three games (11-6,11-9, 11-7).

Henry Quach, of Halifax, played in the Boys Under 13 placing 6th in his division.

The National Junior Circuit (NJC) is designed for high-performance juniors in U15, U17 and U19 age categories, according to a **Squash Canada** news release.

The NJC ranking system is used to select athletes for events such as **World Junior, Pan Am Junior,** and **Battle of the Border teams**.

The **Nova Scotia Squash Coach Josh Rudolph** held a similar squash tournament in Halifax in October 2025 with several players from Manitoba travelling to Halifax for the event. (See **In The Nick** November 2025.)



Nova Scotia's four junior squash players practice at the Winnipeg Winter Club. (Photo by Tina Arsenault.)

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